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a letter from jail

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Photos: Bill Kipp, Steve Cagan, Bob Fitch, der Spiegel, Lionel Delvingre

THE INSIDE STORY



A memorial monument for Poles killed in the uprisings since 1956

Political tug-of-war continues in Poland

By John J. Kulczycki

CRACOW, POLAND

When the Polish government marked the 39th anniversary of the Communist regime on July 22, it radiated more confidence than it had in a long time. The Pope's June visit to Poland, which many in the West saw as a gamble on the part of the Warsaw government, had taken place without a major confrontation.

Despite the Pope's obviously critical comments concerning the government's policies, Polish leader General Jaruzelski might well claim that at least the Vatican accorded him the recognition due a legitimate government head. Even Moscow has reaffirmed its approval by honoring the general with the Order of Lenin soon after the Pope's visit. The anticipated easing of restrictions imposed under martial law and an amnesty for at least some political prisoners seem to demonstrate progress in the "normalization" process so strongly pushed by the Polish Communist authorities. The carrot has now replaced the nightstick as the main tool.

Although the official Party press suggests that the "dignified" tone of the Pope's visit merits the reward of some concessions, it is more likely that Polish authorities recognize the need to try to win the population's cooperation through positive steps. True, the millions who turned out to see the Polish Pope did so with remarkable dignity, yet this had nothing to do with their attitude toward the government, but rather was an indication of their affection for and pride in the Pope.

In fact, most of the crowds took every opportunity to demonstrate their rejection of the government's legitimacy. Although only a small minority brought along banners referring to the banned Solidarity Trade Union, hoisting them drew cheers from everyone around. At Czestochowa, even the Pope felt compelled to gently reprimand the crowd for interrupting his sermon with applause following any remark that might be interpreted as critical of the government.

In Poland, after so many years of censorship, people are adept at reading between the lines. But so eager were the crowds to demonstrate their political opposition that they probably saw more allusions than the Pope intended. Thus at Cracow, some two million listened, mostly silently, to one of John Paul's most purely religious

sermons but came to life at the very end when he mentioned freedom and justice and victory through God.

As is traditional in Poland, the religious services ended with the singing of "God, Protect Poland." But only since the imposition of martial law has it become a practice to raise one's hand in a politically defiant victory salute during the singing of this patriotic religious hymn. Yet, it seemed every arm went up as the crowd began the hymn and stayed up through the now preferred final words, "Lord, deign to return to us a free fatherland." In fact, some in the crowd played cat and mouse with Polish television crews, raising the victory sign whenever the cameras pointed their way. Although Polish television gave the Pope's visit extensive and often live, uncensored coverage, it earned scorn when it cut short transmission so as not to carry the offensive last refrains.

In Poznan, the Pope in his sermon explicitly stated he wished to pay his respects in spirit before the monument erected during Solidarity's heyday to the victims of repression of a worker's uprising in 1956. Many believe he could do this only "in spirit" because the authorities would not agree to a visit in person. In Cracow, slips of paper stamped "Solidarity" were distributed in the field where services were held urging participation in a "pilgrimage" to Nowa Huta, where the Pope was to consecrate a newly built church. Several thousand—mostly young people replete with Solidarity banners—took part in the five-mile trek, which the police chose to divert rather than stop.

There is a tug of war going on in Poland between the Communist regime and most of Polish society, and neither the Pope's visit nor concessions such as the end of martial law and a partial amnesty will radically alter the situation in the near future. The Pope's visit as well as the concessions constitute the preconditions for a dialog between the regime and society, but cannot substitute for it.

For the government to gain the confidence of the people it must initiate a dialog with those whom the majority of the people regard as their authentic representatives. This does not mean Jozef Cardinal Glemp, the primate of the Catholic Church in Poland, or even the Pope. It means Lech Walesa and the other Solidarity leaders.

Union push.

The Polish authorities, recognizing the need for at least a show of support from society, have pushed membership in the supposedly spontaneously organized PRON or Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth and in the officially sanctioned trade unions. But few people in Poland regard PRON with anything but scorn. Even the slow growth of the official trade unions means little in terms of accord between the government and the people.

A recent issue of *Polityka*, a pro-government weekly, noted that at the Lenin Steel Works in Nowa Huta near Cracow the official trade union now has 6,000 members. This may seem like a lot for what once was—and allegedly still is—a Solidarity stronghold. But this is still only a small minority of the work force of 30,000, and more than a third of the union's members are retirees. Most of those who are likely to give in to the various incentives used to promote union membership probably already have, so that prospects for further growth of the union are dim.

Rumors abound in Poland that in the future various social benefits such as access to vacation homes will be

restricted to union members, which explains why so many financially hard-pressed retirees join. Others join because of on-the-job pressures. Those in administrative positions seem particularly vulnerable to such pressures since the economic reforms foresee a cutback in the bloated bureaucracies of Poland. But there is a shortage of skilled workers in Poland. Thus most of the workers who were generally loyal to Solidarity will not be easily coerced into joining the new unions.

No confidence.

The main reason behind the weakness of the new union is a lack of confidence in any government initiatives. Many people have simply gone into what is commonly referred to as "internal migration." Without hope of changing the political facts of Poland, they refuse to join any organization. They see no sign of the government's living up to its claims of reform, only a reversion to things as they existed before August 1980.

Thus at the organizational meeting of the new federation of steel worker trade unions, the executive committee chose as bureau secretary and effective head of the federation not one of their own number elected by the membership nor someone who is currently a steel worker, but a trade unionist who had been active in the old pre-Solidarity, government-sponsored union of steel workers.

Even official church-state relations are now more harmonious than at any time in recent history. In the past 25 years, government permission to build new churches had been a point of contention. But so many new churches are now being built that even government critics wonder if some resources could be put to better use to relieve Poland's severe housing shortage. But harmonious church-state relations only remove an obstacle that divides the Polish government from Polish society—and this alone will not bring the two together.

Instead, the tug of war will probably continue for the foreseeable future. General Jaruzelski cannot undertake an authentic dialog with Walesa and other top Solidarity leaders without appearing defeated. He would then open himself to attack from the Party's hard-liners, who are already critical of what they perceive to be an insufficiently tough approach in dealing with opposition. In such circumstances, the hard-liners could win the backing of the Soviet Union, which would be decisive in their struggle for power. Since cooperation with the government tends to discredit any potential representative of the people, it appears that only a dialog with Solidarity's top leaders would have the desired effect.

Most Poles seem to recognize the hopelessness of their situation, yet this does not deter their opposition. The suppression of Solidarity has meant the end to any belief that a compromise between the regime and a majority of the nation might be achieved. Either the Communist Party continues to rule Poland, or the Poles will choose to rule themselves. Currently, conditions dictate the former.

But none of this should be seen as evidence of progress in the "normalization" process. In the '70s, the Polish government was granted at least a grudging acceptance by the population thanks to a false prosperity based on foreign loans—loans that now have to be repaid. Since such loans are not available to the Polish government, at least for the time being, the only prospect is for a continuation of the ongoing tug of war between the authorities and the majority of Poles.

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IN THESE TIMES

Female rights spell trouble for bosses



Members of 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women

By Steve Askin

PHILADELPHIA

THE CLASS BEGINS WITH A warning from the teacher, anti-union lawyer Stephen J. Cabot: "District 925 is the most difficult adversary" an opponent of union organizing can face because it attracts women workers as a "social organization for...female rights," then draws them into the labor movement.

The union's literature, Cabot's assistant adds, appeals to "emotionalism" with statements like this: "women's work has long been undervalued and underpaid. Systems of employment have not been set up to be fair to office workers because we aren't represented in the decision making."

The classroom is a small meeting hall in the Center City Holiday Inn here. The teacher is a blustery, self-promoting management lawyer who charges corporations \$200 an hour for advice on fighting unions. Cabot speaks with reporters as often as he can (he even hired a press agent to help him get media attention) and often boasts to interviewers that organized labor views him as "the biggest, no-good, union-busting S.O.B. that ever lived."

Cabot and others like him have made "union busting" a half-billion dollar a year business, according to some estimates. Capitalizing on executives' fears of a revolt by women office workers, these consultants earn much of their money selling "union prevention" advice to banks, insurance companies and other firms with large clerical staffs.

The seminar was not open to the press, but this reporter got inside by pretending to be a corporate manager. It was designed to show employers how to prevent organizing by the Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) fledgling District 925—the only U.S. union that traces its roots directly to the women's movement. The District was formed just two years ago as a joint project of SEIU and 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women.

Though participants did not identify their companies, it was evident from their questions and concerns that the four dozen students included a number of top officials from Philadelphia's biggest

banks and insurance companies, along with lower ranking managers.

Perhaps a fifth of the students were women. A few participants argued with Cabot on tactics or points of law, but nobody questioned his insinuation that it is somehow deceitful for a union to make women's rights an organizing issue.

Organizing issue: women's rights.

District 925's women's movement connection evokes a particularly fearful corporate response. Last summer an official at the Georgia Chamber of Commerce let his fears run wild and warned that employers may find themselves confronted by "militant feminist organizing" by 9 to 5. In a letter promoting the chamber's seminar on "Managing Today's White Collar Women," he asked if employers know what to do "when a group of female clerical employees barges in noisily demanding a published procedure for career advancement."

er advancement."

A more sophisticated union fighter, Anthony McKeown of Modern Management, Inc., warned a 1981 hospital personnel administrators' conference that unions have "come light-years in realizing the potential benefits to them of the wom-



Lyndal Delevingne

Inside advice from a union-blocking seminar

Questioned by reporters about their work, anti-union consultants say they aim to improve working conditions so much that employees won't even want to form a union. Talking to management officials, they often tell a very different story.

In a telephone interview, Stephen J. Cabot said that "modern corporate managers" are learning that "openness, honesty, reasonably efficient response to employee problems, fairness and even-handedness" will improve productivity and discourage unionization at the same time. The goal, he said, is "not only to avoid unionization, but to constructively and positively prevent labor relations problems."

At a seminar last fall on District 925, a new union that organizes office workers, Cabot taught employers how they can block unionization without treating workers well. The seminar also doubled as a sales pitch for Cabot's union-fighting services. Here are some samples of his advice:

- Devise personnel policies that project the appearance of workplace justice

while making certain "that management is in total control." Disciplinary review panels can be used to create "the impression, at least, of impartiality." Management can set up such panels without giving up our management right to "terminate any employee at any time for any reason...which is really the truth in any non-union company, isn't it?"

- Weed out union sympathizers, District 925 organizers and other "rotten apples" through careful pre-employment screening. Employers were advised, for example, to print a statement on the firm's policy of remaining non-union, show it to all potential employees and carefully watch their responses.

- Erect obstacles to union activity before organizing begins. Suggestions included: ban any posting of notices or charity fundraising in the office so that the "no solicitation rule" can be applied "evenhandedly" to pro-union workers; conduct attitude surveys to identify potential union strongholds.

- Pinpoint the signs of labor organizing before pro-union workers go public.

en's movement," bringing "nothing short of a revolution" to labor relations. Where women's rights is an organizing issue in a labor election, the union is more likely to win, he said. Because most doctors and hospital administrators are men; most nurses and hospital service and maintenance workers are women, "the situation is ripe for confrontation," he concluded.

McKeown and his partner, soft-spoken labor relations consultant Herbert G. Melnick, insist they are not union busters. Several years ago, as he chatted over coffee in his comfortable suburban Chicago office, Melnick spoke warmly and enthusiastically of his desire to serve as "marriage counselor between worker and boss to keep them working positively together so that they have less conflict and more harmony."

Since that meeting, his company, Modern Management Inc. (MM), has helped hundreds of employers thwart union organizing drives, concentrating on health care and other service industries with large concentrations of women workers.

After a brutal battle with nurses in a Milwaukee hospital, a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) administrative law judge (ALJ) charged that supervisors coached by MM violated the law using "every trick that a professional interrogator uses against a prisoner of war. They created stress, pulled rank, cajoled, threatened, promised, personalized the issue and otherwise attempted to brainwash the nurses."

The judge, McKeown said, "failed to understand the dynamics" of a campaign in which management honestly communicates its opposition to unionization. The hospital refused to say anything, but appealed an order that said it must recognize the union. As a result, four and a half years after the vote the nurses still have no union representation.

In a Connecticut hospital campaign, an ALJ found that MM-guided supervisors illegally put a worker on probation because she backed the union, intimidated another by making her believe management spied on union meetings and pressed others to tell them about the union's activities.

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According to Cabot, those signs include: spread of anti-company rumors; overtime refusal; employee attempts to learn more about company policies; any employee behavior shifts; and anti-company washroom graffiti. ("How many of you go into the stalls" to read the writing on the walls?" seminar participants were asked.)

At the seminar, Cabot appeared to exaggerate District 925's strength and his own familiarity with it. While the union's sole Philadelphia staffer worked on an organizing campaign across the country, Cabot warned that "full-time professionals" from District 925 "have a real presence in town" and are busy organizing Philadelphia banks and other downtown employers.

Under questioning, Cabot acknowledged that District 925 has thus far organized only one Philadelphia workplace, a labor movement law firm he said has "20 to 40" clericals. It has only eight.

Cabot called 925 "the most difficult adversary" he has ever confronted. District 925 officials insist he has never represented management in any of their organizing campaigns.

Cabot said his firm did painstaking research to compile a list of 9 to 5/Working Women victories that he distributed to seminar participants. Actually, the list was copied from a Working Women brochure. —S.A.

IN SHORT

Hollywood, Indiana

In an effort to curb prostitution and "homosexual activities," the Indianapolis Police Department has taken to videotaping downtown neighborhoods in the Hoosier capital, Barney McClelland reports. The practice has drawn the fire of the Indiana Civil Liberties Union (ICLU), which is threatening to sue the police for violating the civil rights of those who live and congregate in the areas under surveillance. "We pointed out to the police that homosexuality is not illegal in Indiana," said Michael Lee Gradison, ICLU executive director. "Not even the police can construe that gays congregating on the street is an illegal activity."

In a recent interview with the *Indianapolis Star*, Police Chief Joseph McAtee denied that the surveillance was intended to discourage homosexual activity, but rather to rid the city of homosexual prostitutes. Displaying some concern for civil liberties—the police department's—McAtee countered the public criticism by declaring, "The police department has the same right to videotape as anyone else does."

Unfortunately for the police, though, their bleeding-heart opponents have won the support of some prominent allies—*Hill Street Blues* castmembers. Actor Rene Enriquez (Lt. Catellano) and producer Scott Brazil were in Indianapolis recently to receive the ICLU's First Amendment Award for the series and discussed the police videotaping with reporters. Enriquez called it "horrible," and Brazil asked, "Whatever happened to the cop on the beat? It seems to me if you put a cop in uniform to walk by, that will solve the problem."

The more, the merrier

Some 470 delegates from 81 cities met in Chicago July 2-3 to form a National Congress of Unemployed Organizations (NCUO), Dan La Botz reports. The Communist Party USA played a large role in organizing the NCUO through groups in which it is active, such as Trade Union Action and Democracy (TUAD) and Local Jobs Or Income Now (JOIN) chapters. Several of those attending identified themselves as Communist Party members, speakers from the floor talked about the role of the CP in organizing the meeting, and Tass was on hand to cover the event.

The formation of NCUO comes little more than a month after the founding of another national unemployed organization—the National Unemployed Network (NUN), established at a recent meeting in Erie, Pa. The CP's organization of a second unemployed group apparently springs from a difference in outlook: TUAD is generally hesitant to criticize labor officialdom and is sympathetic to Democratic Party liberals, while the NUN group was sparked by the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee, which was organized by rank and file labor activists—along with International Socialists—without official union involvement or partisan political goals. Frank Lumpkin, chair of the Wisconsin Steel Save Our Jobs Committee and now of NCUO, pledged to cooperate with NUN. "The more unemployed organizations there are the better," said Lumpkin. "If Mon Valley and NUN are fighting for jobs for Wisconsin Steel workers—then take my hand, brother."

Salvadoran suit advances

A federal district judge in Washington, D.C., has ruled that Hotel and Restaurant Employees (HRE) Local 25 may continue with a class action suit against the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Allen Ebert-Miner reports. The local, which represents about 1,000 Salvadoran workers, has challenged INS' refusal to allow Salvadorans to remain in the U.S. under guidelines often used to protect Poles, Ethiopians and others who fear persecution if they return to their homelands (*In These Times*, April 20, 1983).

Rejecting the government's argument that immigration policies are political, executive branch decisions and not subject to judicial review, Judge Charles Richey wrote that unions have a right—and may even have an obligation—to defend members whose legal immigration status is in doubt.

I'm OK, you're fired

Consider the dilemma: you're a boss forced to trim your staff of bookkeepers by 25 percent, and oddly enough you feel guilt and remorse about having to send coworkers to the unemployment line. That's the problem pondered in a recent issue of the *Boston Business Journal* by a psychologist who writes a column—"Executive Ego"—advising managers on how to take a healthier attitude toward tough career decisions. The manager in question suffered from stress and depression, feeling that she "should have done something" to help the women she had to fire. The psychologist opined that she suffered from "disordered thinking" and had "ignored the obvious: that life is often unfair, that she doesn't dictate company policy; and that she was only following orders." With therapy the manager finally "acknowledged the complexity of a stressful experience" and overcame her guilt. Concluded the psychologist: "It's all a matter of how we look at things and what we tell ourselves."

—Joan Walsh



Bin Bingel (far left) founded the Dutch Union Against the Work Ethic.

Dutch youth ask living wage

AMSTERDAM—As general unemployment in the Netherlands threatens this year to hit 15 percent, and even 40 percent for people under age 25, the left's demand for full employment has been joined by calls not for jobs, but for the provision of a state-paid living-wage. As one young Dutchman put it, the "living-wage would give everybody the right not to work and would eliminate the obligation of pretending to look for non-existent jobs."

That proposal is supported by the four-month-old Dutch Union Against the Work Ethic (*Nederlandse Bond Tegen Arbeidsethos*—NBTA) and recently won parliamentary support from the small Protestant Radical Party (PPR) (13,000 members, one seat) and a minority section of the Labor Party (PvdA), the largest single grouping in the national legislature. The proposal has also entered into the debate of the Pacifist Party—through their youth sections—and has been endorsed by a number of non-parliamentary ecological groups.

No figure has been named for the basic living wage, but it is widely assumed that it would roughly equal current minimum social security payments of 1,200-1,400 guilders a month (\$480-560).

Bin Bingel, the unemployed 24-year-old founder of NBTA, sees the fight for the basic living-wage as the first step in a longer battle to radically change traditional attitudes about the value of work. "On the one hand," Bingel says, "we want to 'decriminalize' unemployment by giving people the right not to work and, on the other, help people realize that by trading their time producing for their time consuming we can all live more creative lives."

The union's success in attracting press and radio coverage, along with almost weekly speaking engagements at universities and schools training social security workers, leads Jan Williams, one of the union's 10 leaders, to remark that "the growing feeling is there simply aren't going to be

all these jobs everyone promises. The government is saying tighten your belts and wait until the recession is over, while labor is demanding the creation of two million jobs but can't tell us where they will come from."

The government predicts that of a working age population of 4.7 million, 1.5 million will be supported by social security checks by the end of the year. The resulting ratio of one person of working age not working for every 2.1 that do contrasts with a ratio of one to seven 10 years ago. "Even more revealing," says journalist Stan Van Houcke, "is that of a total population of 14.2 million, only 22.5 percent have paying jobs."

The Netherlands remains the envy of the world's welfare states because of a combination of a strong Labor Party and an economy underpinned by natural gas and three of the world's largest corporations—Unilever, Phillips and Royal Dutch Petroleum. In 1980, the *arbeidsinkomensquote*—a Dutch-invented measure of the share that labor takes of the total value added to goods by Dutch industry—was more than 90 percent, while the government levied—and spent—61 percent of the nation's gross national product.

Recent statements by the two largest Dutch employers indicate that an economic upturn is unlikely to create an immediate expansion of the job market: the government's plan to rationalize its social security system is predicted to eliminate 6,000 jobs by 1990, while the chairman of the board of Phillips, W. Dekker, recently said, "Investing doesn't mean creating work. Investing

means using capital in an economically responsible way." A company report predicted that by 1990, 56 percent of its present work force (336,000 globally, 73,000 in the Netherlands) would be "redundant."

Both the governing coalition and the opposition Labor Party have tacitly recognized that the unemployment problem will not easily be solved by including in their platforms a long-term commitment to so-called "unpaid labor." In practice this amounts to government funding of the basic costs of organizations deemed in the public interest (now everything from theater groups to militant pacifists) and whose members are sustained by unemployment checks.

Although a few Dutch retailers, nervous about the declining buying power of Netherlands' unemployed, have come out in favor of the basic living-wage, its primary support comes from the generation who came of age at a time when their first possible jobs were lost to the recession.

—Tony Levitas

A new image for herbicides

CHICAGO—Faced with mounting opposition to widespread use of the herbicide 2,4-D, a primary component of the Vietnam-era defoliants Agent White and Agent Orange, manufacturers and applicators of the popular weed killer have launched a nationwide effort aimed at bolstering what they claim is a "30-year record of safe and effective use."



Jan Everhard-Amsterdam

Whitmore-ROTHCO

Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657. Please include your address and phone number.

The chemical industry's fight is being organized by a little known group called the National Coalition for a Reasonable 2,4-D Policy, based in a large office on Chicago's Michigan Avenue. The 18-month-old coalition, supported largely by Dow Chemical Company and Diamond Shamrock, the chemical's two primary manufacturers, operates on a \$120,000 annual budget, according to executive director Glenn W. Bostrom.

"We believe that 2,4-D is among the most beneficial herbicides available," said Bostrom. "Scientists have stated that it is the single greatest advancement in weed control and one of the most significant gains in agriculture. We would have trouble feeding our people without this chemical."

But opponents of 2,4-D use say the defoliant causes an array of serious health disorders when used widely, including miscarriages, birth defects, nervous system disorders, kidney and liver damage and cancer. "Scientific studies show that 2,4-D causes cancer in laboratory animals,"

courses, even cemeteries for weed and brush control.

In recent months a series of revelations has cast serious doubt on several key scientific studies used to register the chemical with the federal Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, Canadian and U.S. scientists discovered that 2,4-D contains several compounds of the toxic chemical dioxin. Just as important are a new series of studies linking 2,4-D to increased rates of several rare cancers found in Scandinavian railway workers exposed to the chemical for long periods of time.

During the past 10 months, opponents have presented these concerns to federal and state courts, county commissions and local boards of health in at least 18 states and have gained injunctions banning the chemical's use in some cases and restricting its application in others.

In 1980, a year after the EPA suspended most uses of two other phenoxy herbicides—2,4, 5-T and Silvex—because of their link to high miscarriage rates in Oregon, the agency initiated an investigation of the scientific safety tests used to market 2,4-D. So far, according to the EPA, 16 new studies have been finished and are under review. But nine studies that will determine whether the chemical causes cancer or birth defects in laboratory animals have yet to be completed and are not expected to be ready until 1985.

In the meantime, the pro-2,4-D coalition is busy mailing thick packets of material to thousands of farmers, timber professionals and state agriculture officials that cite industry data that Bostrom says "prove beyond a doubt that this chemical is safe to use." Included in the packet is a 33-page report, written by Dr. Wendell Mullison, a retired Dow researcher who was among the first scientists to synthesize 2,4-D. Mullison's study says 2,4-D is not toxic to animals or human life and is less toxic than salt. It contends that the dioxin found in 2,4-D is far less poisonous than the TCDD dioxin that is a by-product of manufacturing the herbicide 2,4,5-T.

Mullison's paper also criticizes the Swedish studies, citing "significant deficiencies" and bias. Scientists at the National Cancer Institute, however, have carefully reviewed the Swedish studies and found them "very well done" and a "cause for concern."

The coalition's arsenal also includes a six-page quarterly newsletter reporting on new "trouble spots" where 2,4-D's use is being challenged. It will also provide modest funding to sister coalitions in 10 states for mailing costs and other expenses. This year, the coalition organized a network of chemical industry scientists and public relations professionals who have been very busy speaking to trade associations, community groups and state agriculture officials.

"Our mission is education," said Bostrom. "Once we provide our material to a group in a trouble spot, we seem able to limit concern. People have told us time and again how glad they are to receive our help."

—Keith Schneider



U.S. planes spray Agent Orange.

said Lewis Regenstein, author of "America the Poisoned." "Where people have been exposed to 2,4-D, the evidence is clear that it causes an incredibly high number of miscarriages."

2,4-D is a member of the controversial phenoxy herbicide family developed in 1943 at Fort Detrick, Md., for use in biological and chemical warfare. It was used as a weapon during the '60s when millions of gallons were sprayed on the jungles of Vietnam as Agent White and Agent Orange. Since then veterans groups have claimed exposure to the chemicals has caused cancer in Vietnam vets and birth defects in their offspring.

Nevertheless, it has remained an important source of revenue for Dow and Diamond Shamrock and an important agricultural chemical. Between 70 and 80 million pounds are used each year nationwide, sprayed by farmers on wheat and barley fields, by timber companies on vast stretches of clear cut forest, by utilities on power-line right-of-way and by landscape professionals on suburban lawns, golf

Briefing: Who pays for banks' foreign losses?



NEW YORK—Consumers may be paying a high price for American banks' bad investments abroad, according to a new report on retail banking in New York State. With six of the nation's top 10 banks based in New York, the report found that since 1980 these banks "have increased charges to banking customers by hundreds of millions of dollars and have effectively withdrawn essential banking services from many New Yorkers." The banks, it says, "are clearly seeking to augment profits and cover losses on foreign loans."

The report, issued by New York State Sen. Franz S. Leichter, is subtitled "Consumer Beware." It charges that banks "have developed a two-tier system, with sweeteners and inducements to the large depositor and reduced services grudgingly given to the mass of bank users." In an analysis of a dozen major New York banks, the report found that they increased profits by:

- tripling and quadrupling charges for maintaining checking accounts;
- imposing fees on certain savings accounts;
- imposing charges for every automatic teller machine withdrawal;
- doubling, tripling and quadrupling fees for check certification and money orders, as well as stop-payment orders and small safe deposit boxes.



rupting fees for check certification and money orders, as well as stop-payment orders and small safe deposit boxes.

The banking community has disputed the findings of the report. James P. Murphy, executive vice president of the New York State Bankers Association, said that increased bank charges reflect the real costs of those services they provide. Another banker argued that the report



took facts "out of context," and that consumers should shop around for a bank as they would for a new car. "The name of the game in banking is segmentation, offering different services to different people," he said.

However, critics say banks aren't admitting that service costs have actually dropped as a result of computerized accounting. And deregulation has allowed banks to compete with brokerage houses but it hasn't benefitted the average citizen. While banks have developed a variety of financial services for wealthy clients, they have ignored small customers, except as a growing source of "service fee" income. These conditions are being reflected in other parts of the country, where banks follow New York's lead.

While bankers argue that they must raise customer charges to cover "increased costs," many of the nation's largest banks posted record profits and record increases in

profits last year. "Every major New York bank is much more profitable today than three years ago," according to the Leichter report. Profits at Citicorp, for example, rose 35 percent in 1982 over 1981; Chemical Bank's profits rose 12 percent; and Bank of New York's rose 25 percent.

But the banks have had to deal with unprecedented risks, too. Encouraged by the federal government, private banks lent large sums of money to Third World countries in the '70s and early '80s. Of the \$750 billion owed by developing countries, more than \$400 billion is owed to private banks, mostly U.S. institutions. It is an ocean of debt in which the banking system could founder.

Major lending agencies are trying to prevent the total bankruptcy of a growing number of Third World countries. More than 25 of these countries, with bank loans of around \$250 billion, have been forced to re-schedule their debt repayments. In one major case, Mexico, with an \$80 billion foreign debt, worked out a deal with creditor governments and private bankers, by which they were given an additional \$5 billion in emergency loans so debt payments could continue.

Even the usually optimistic *New York Times* reported that "many American banks may soon show smaller profits and major increases in problem loans" as a result of Third World lending. For example, despite a rise in profits, Citicorp cited an 83 percent increase in non-performing loans in the first quarter of 1983. Chase Manhattan's profits actually fell

as a result of losses on foreign loans.

New York banks aren't the only ones to be affected. As the international debt crisis worsens, other major banks that have lent large amounts of money to the Third World or Eastern Europe, like Bank of America and Mellon Bank, as well as Irving Trust, Manufacturers Hanover and Marine Midland, are likely to report similar losses. And since these banks usually lead syndicates on major loans, their losses in the Third World can be felt in smaller banks around the country. Many Americans, reading their monthly balance statements or passbooks, are finding that their checking or savings accounts are directly influenced by events in Argentina, Poland and Mexico. Despite the optimism of some bankers and their Reagan administration backers, consumers may begin to clamor for more, not less, regulation in banking.

—Josh Martin

IN THE NATION

LABOR

AT&T breakup worries unions

By Dan La Botz

CHICAGO

UP TO NOW WORKERS AT American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T), whose contract expires August 6, had been spared much of the pain stemming from the reorganization of industry and recasting of labor-management relations that has swept the country in recent years. While auto, steel and electrical plants closed and hundreds of thousands were laid off, and while the unions representing workers in those industries took concessions, telephone workers continued to work with few lay-offs and few concessions, and even made modest wage gains.

But all that will change next January 1. That day the Bell System, as the result of an anti-trust suit brought by the Justice Department, will be broken up into eight separate corporations. Telephone workers fear for their futures, and they are anxious about layoffs and concessions or a new era of strikes against either of them. Perhaps most important, the national contract could be lost, resulting in regional contracts that could reduce the workers' bargaining power.

While AT&T—which has more assets

(\$155 billion) and more workers (650,000) than any other corporation in the world—is broken up into their eight corporations, the 22 operating companies, such as Illinois Bell Telephone and Pacific Telephone, will be reorganized into seven regional holding companies. But AT&T will remain in control of Long Lines, Western Electric, Bell Labs, American Bell marketing and AT&T International.

The current negotiations, which began May 19, could mark the last time telephone workers bargain with their employers in one national contract. Currently workers are represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) with 500,000 members, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers with about 100,000 and the small Telecommunications International Union with 50,000 members, of whom many are New England telephone workers.

The CWA is taking a strike vote, but no strike is expected.

The main contract concern, according to Duayne Trecker, spokesman for the Communications Workers of America is with "employment security, which has to do with lifetime employment potential for the workers who are our members." The union wants "training and retraining and a portfolio of skills in high tech industry so that, as the industry evolves, workers are able to adapt to new incoming technology and have skills they can take from one line to another, from one employer to another."

The 1,000 members of CWA Local 4304 in Cuyahoga County, Ohio—who work in craft, clerical and administrative jobs—are already experiencing changes due to the reorganization. "Many of our employees are being moved to other entities that have been created," says Ed Hunka, Local 4304 president.

According to Hunka, his members are currently concerned about the whole job picture because of the insecurities the divestiture has created. "We need some type of affirmative program to allow our members to become retrained so they can become eligible for other occupations," Hunka says. "We're uncertain ourselves—very few people within AT&T even know what we're going to look like at the end of 1984."

Greg Riemer, vice-president of Local 4309 in Cleveland, Ohio, which has 2,200 members working as clerical and sales employees, reports the same worries. "People are beginning to move out of phone stores that were operated by Ohio Bell into phone stores that are operated by American Bell, Inc.," he says. "Quite a few of those people ended up being laid off."

"And they've gotten their jobs back," he continues. "But with those sorts of things happening, we wonder if the company is going to be able to keep a good level of employment, or are we going to be faced with some sort of lay-offs?"

Cushioning layoffs?

Ilene Winkler has been a switching technician for nine and a half years and is a member of CWA Local 1101 in New York where she works with a local caucus called the Bell Winger. She believes the union should take an even stronger stand for job security.

"If they're serious about employment security, they should negotiate a no lay-off clause and cut the work week from 40 to 35 hours. You don't negotiate proce-

dures for cushioning lay-offs if you're serious," she says.

While job security is foremost on the minds of CWA members, there is also a concern about concessions, particularly any that down-grade jobs.

Says Riemer, "Phone stores used to be staffed by service representatives, and then with the last contract the company decided to put people in those jobs and call them customer clerks. It paid them at a wage level that was significantly lower." With divestiture, all phone store employees will be customer clerks, according to Riemer.

Winkler says that in New York work rules have been changed and one job has been downgraded—from a tester to a clerical job at about \$100 a week less. Maintenance administrators have also been downgraded to clerks. Although people are not being downgraded, jobs are, and that means lower wages for phone workers over the long run.

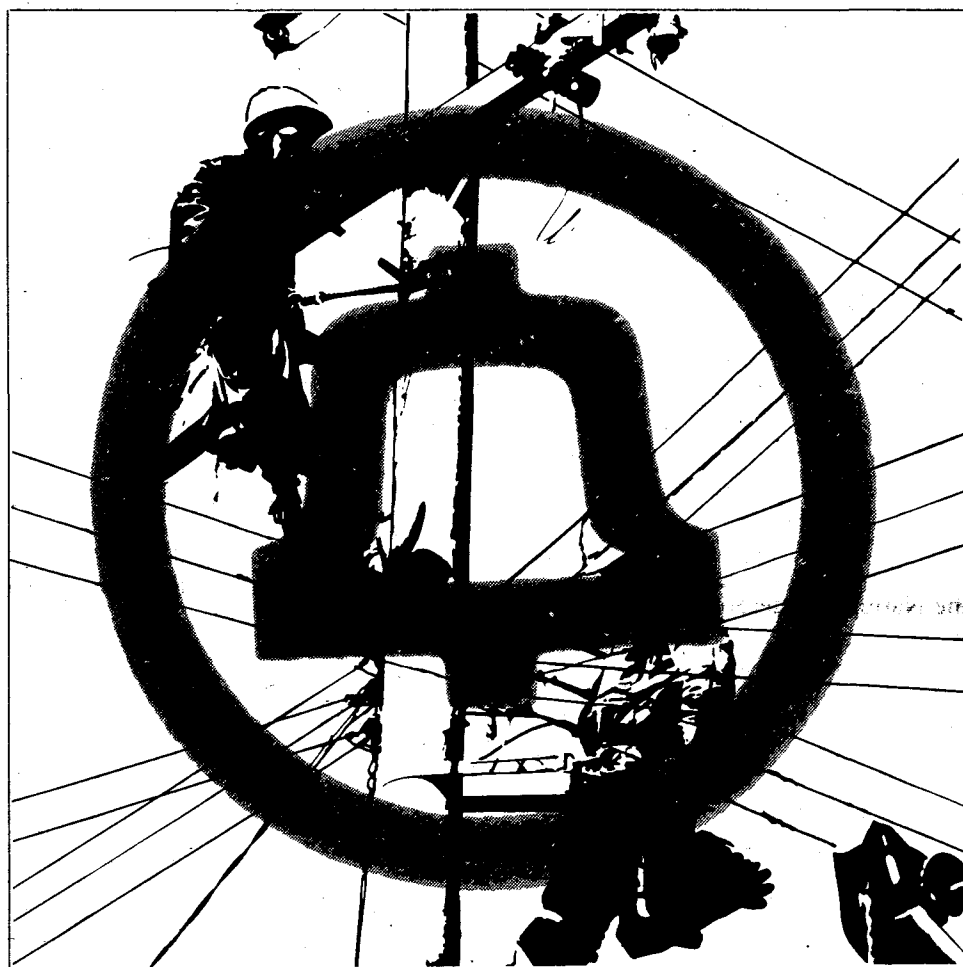
The CWA is also trying to expand Quality of Work Life (QWL) programs that started with the 1980 contract. "Who better than the person who works there all the time would know the improvements that can be made, where the pitfalls are?" asks Trecker. "We want the involvement of the workers in the deci-

cautious about the program. "We're into Quality of Work Life, and we're like infants at the present time," says Hunka. "I can't say if the program as it's presently structured has hurt us or helped. As a union we're attempting to stay involved at all levels of QWL to see if the 'horror stories' we've heard about QWL are true."

Wage gains are not the top point on the CWA agenda, but they are an important consideration. In 1980 the CWA negotiated a 34 percent wage increase over three years. Workers are now paid on the average \$12 an hour, with another \$4.50 going for benefits. General Telephone of California—which is not part of the Bell System—recently signed a contract granting a 28 percent wage increase over three years. Trecker said that would be a good gauge of what the CWA is seeking from Bell. (AT&T profits rose 13.6 percent in 1981 to \$6.9 billion. Last year they hit \$7.2 billion—up 4.3 percent.)

Hunka, however, says, "I wouldn't like to use the GTE as a guideline. It was a rather big wage increase, but they also gave up their cost of living. Under no circumstances does my membership want to give up their COLA."

No matter what terms appear in the final contract, local union officials want



sion-making process at all levels of management, in the conception, design and implementation of new technology."

Other unions, the United Electrical Workers (UE) for example, have opposed QWL programs, arguing they weaken union power on the shop floor. But Trecker says the CWA is not afraid. "CWA has a lot of confidence in its members to be able to work on a one-to-one basis with management in decision making. We're not fearful that our members are going to lose their perspective."

Local union officials, however, appear

"We're uncertain, very few people within AT&T even know what it's going to look like in 1984," says one CWA local president.

the contract to last at least three years. "We can't come back in one year—AT&T and the operating companies will knock us out of our socks," says Hunka. "We're going to need time to regroup."

So, ultimately, it's not this contract that worries members, but the next. This contract is the last one the unions will bargain with Bell and they don't know who they'll be negotiating with next time.

Although for completely different reasons, telephone workers face the same problem as that faced by auto, steel, trucking and beef meat packing workers, all of whom have seen their national pattern agreement eroded or destroyed in the last few years. As pattern agreements have fallen apart, smaller groups of workers are facing increasingly powerful corporations.

"We have a lot more strength bargaining on the nationwide level than we do at the local level," says Riemer. "So we'd like to see national bargaining continue. There's a national master freight agreement that the Teamsters have, and they bargain with all the trucking companies. We'd like to have that sort of thing, too."

If national pattern bargaining is not worked out, then telephone workers can expect a new era of strikes to defend themselves against company demands for concessions. As CWA President Glen Watts has said, "There is a real likelihood there will be more labor strife in the next decade than there has been in the last 10 years."

There's Rarely A Moment's Peace

Life can be frustrating at times. There are world problems, work problems, and personal problems. And despite your best efforts things don't always work out as you had hoped. Occasionally you need some quiet time to think and reflect on the meaning of life. And the meaning of your life.

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AGRICULTURE

World farmers' summit sets strategies

By Ken Meter

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

ONE HUNDRED FARMERS from nine industrial nations gathered here in July for what they called a "Farm Crisis Survival Meeting." Comparing notes on credit, foreclosures, state and land takeovers and price supports, for the first time farmers began to set common strategies independent of their respective governments.

Sponsored by the North American Farm Alliance, the Canadian Farm Survival Association and the U.S. Farmers Association, the farmers were responding to Reagan administration efforts to interfere with European Economic Community (EEC) farm subsidies. Secretary John Block of the USDA has contended that European policies are hurting the U.S. grain trade.

By EEC agreement, for example, French farmers are paid a per-bushel subsidy by their government when the world market price is below an established level so that farm purchasing power keeps pace with industrial workers' wages. Farmer consumption and investment supposedly will then generate enough income to repay the subsidy.

But according to Block, such subsidy programs give European growers an unfair advantage over U.S. grain farmers. Since the U.S. can make use of its huge farms and large-scale equipment, he argues, U.S. farmers can compete better when the world market price is low, and can make up for low prices by increasing their sales volume.

But Amand Chetallier, president of the National Federation of Farmers Associations, disputed USDA's reasoning, saying current policies are squeezing agriculture out of the economy in favor of industry. "Farmers are considered marginal in our society. Consumers are distant from us. They don't understand the importance of the subsidy."

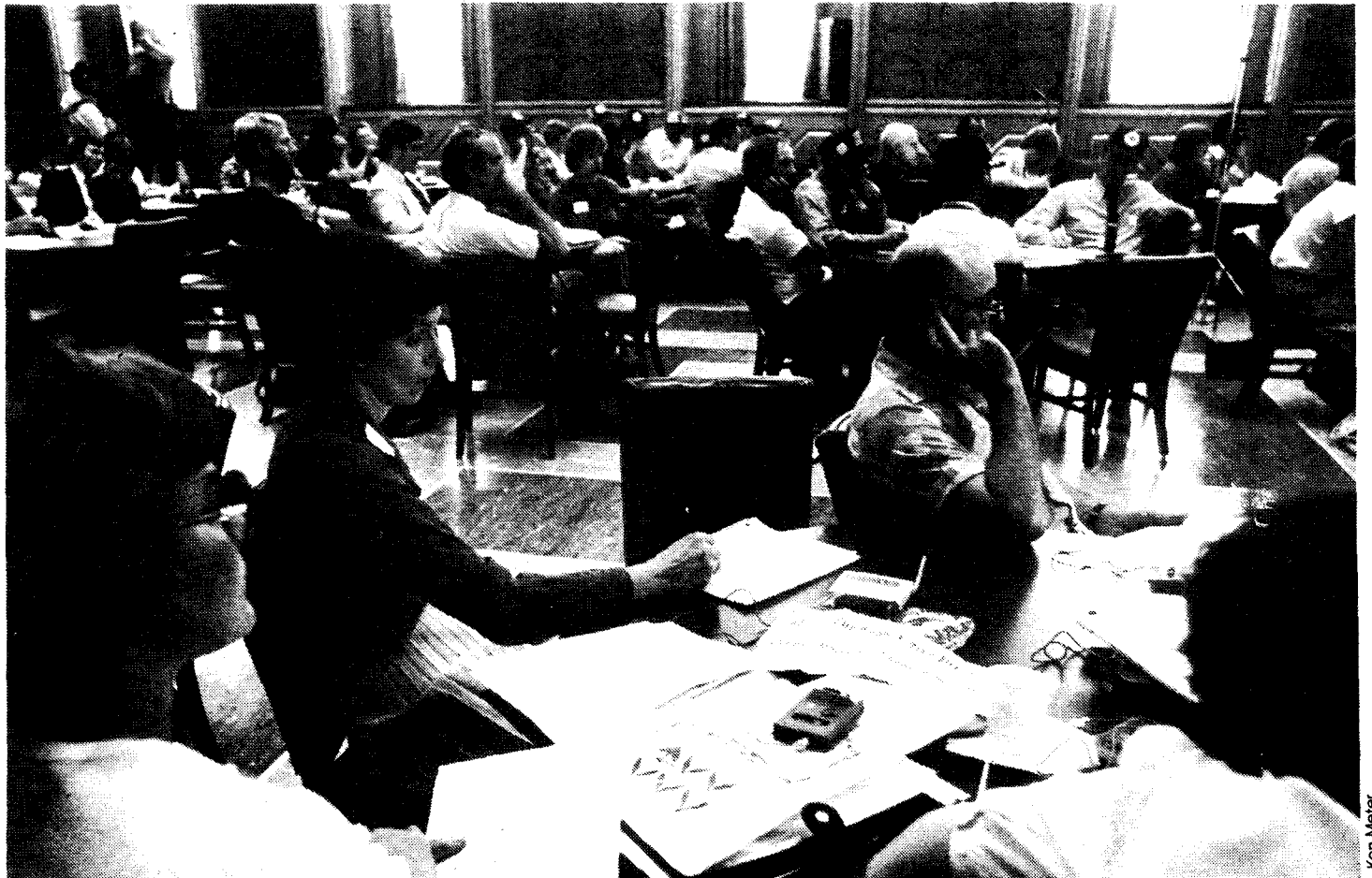
This past spring French farmers set up tractors on highways and destroyed crops in an effort to obtain higher price rates from the EEC. "We seek rates that take into account the cost of production and also reduce some of the competition," Chetallier said. "Currently, the subsidy is based on the costs of the farms with the highest productivity." Thus some operators who cannot invest in new equipment are being squeezed out.

Like farmers in the U.S., French farmers have also had to organize on a local level to block bank efforts to force repayment of farm mortgages. "Farming is a way of life that can prove quite resistant to capitalism and the intervention of state economies," Chetallier concluded.

Wolfgang Reimer, a West German farmer, painted a similar picture of bankruptcies in his country: "Once the policy was to keep farm wages high and the price of food as low as possible. Now the state policy is designed to support the

Continued on page 10

U.S. farmers argued that current policies are squeezing out agriculture in favor of industry.



Farmers, unhappy with their governments' agriculture policies, tried to chart an independent course at their "Crisis Survival Meeting."

PLANT CLOSINGS

Union rights, city needs protected by relocation bill

By Bill Hinchberger

SAN FRANCISCO

ON JULY 12 THIS NORTHERN California city adopted a policy on plant relocation and municipal development that may be the strongest in the nation. Following negotiations with the rank-and-file United Electrical Workers Union (UE) and the Plant Closures Project of Oakland, the city of Vacaville adopted precedent-setting rules stipulating that any firm receiving tax-exempt financing to locate in Vacaville must agree to comply with affirmative action requirements, recognize the union that represented its workers at the company's old site and give at least one year's notice of a shutdown or reduction in operations.

In addition, the city agreed to give financial assistance to workers who attempt to retain their jobs by following a firm to Vacaville from another California community.

"These things don't appear in the best of the plant closures bills that have been filed but not yet adopted in California," said Mike Eisenscher, an organizer with UE.

The policy is not plant-closings legislation in the traditional sense. All previously enacted or proposed laws focus on advance notice by the company and on softening the blow for the affected community and workers. Such legislation exists in two states—Maine and Wisconsin—and in a handful of municipalities, including Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. And Congress and about 20 state legislatures have considered similar legislation.

The Vacaville regulations are unique because they apply to firms that plan to commence operations there, but their scope is limited because they cover only companies receiving tax-exempt financing.

The city entered into negotiations in order to avert a drawn-out legal battle over the relocation of Simpson Dura-Vent, a pipe-making firm with operations in Redwood City, a community south of San Francisco. In January Vacaville offered to provide \$2.5 million in tax-exempt financing to Simpson Dura-Vent to assist in its relocation to the city's redevelopment area. UE, which represents the Redwood City workers, filed suit, alleging that the offer violated state laws designed to prevent the use of tax money to lure companies from one California community to another. And the Plant Closures Project—a coalition of labor, community and religious groups—joined the action.

Faced with a legal threat to their entire development plan, city officials were willing to make concessions. "We felt that we could get certain demands in exchange for allowing the redevelopment plan to go through," Eisenscher said.

Ironically, workers at Simpson Dura-Vent do not stand to benefit from the agreement. The company and city have agreed to abandon the tax-exempt financing scheme, and the firm now intends to relocate using conventional funding. Thus it does not fall under the agreement.

Eisenscher said the pursuit of the Vacaville agreement by the Dura-Vent workers "represents the highest standard of working-class solidarity. This is being presented as their gift to the labor movement

with no assurance that they will benefit from it."

Most observers agree that the new regulations might hinder Vacaville in attracting new industry. But City Manager Walter Graham does not believe that the effect will be substantial.

"The agreement will probably cause some industries not to locate in Vacaville," he said, adding that those would be marginal firms with records of poor labor relations. "Companies that do not have good relations with their employees are precluded from coming here," he said. "Let some other community have those labor headaches."

The agreement is encouraging to labor and community leaders who have been working for plant closures legislation. "Vacaville really is a breakthrough," observed David Jones of the National Conference of Alternative State and Local Policies. "If word of this gets out, this could be attractive to other states and communities."

Joe Regacho, co-director of the Plant Closures Project, said that his group may shift its emphasis from statewide legislation to local ordinances—afterward encouraging those communities to push for a statewide measure.

Eisenscher suggested that the tactics used to win the Vacaville agreement could be effective elsewhere. "This did not come as the result of a top-down lobbying effort by labor leaders, their representatives or political leaders," he said. "It came as a result of direct action by the workers and their supporters in the community."

Meanwhile, negotiations between the company and UE for a relocation settlement have broken off, as have negotiations over the union contract, which expires August 9. The relocation would cost Redwood City 110 permanent and more than 100 seasonal jobs. More than 95 percent of the firm's employees are minority workers, mostly Latinos. But those workers have not given up on saving their jobs. "We will continue our militant struggle on the floor of the shop, in the streets and anywhere else that we have to," pledged Eisenscher.

Bill Hinchberger writes regularly for the Easy Reader in Hermosa Beach, Calif.

IN THE WORLD



SOUTH AFRICA

Drought, famine fall heavily on rural black majority

By Jan Pager

GABORNE, BOTSWANA

IT IS WINTER NOW IN SOUTHERN Africa—the dry cold season. Day after day for the next two months, the sun will shine from a clear blue sky onto the yellows, browns and golds of dried-up fields awaiting October's spring rains.

But for much of the region, this winter is different. Last spring the rains failed again, and experts say this may be the worst drought south of the Zambesi river in 200 years.

In Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, 10 million people are expected to need emergency food aid to survive the winter. No figures have been released for South Africa, but for the estimated 11 million blacks living in rural areas, this winter will likely be disastrous. Normally a grain-exporting country, South Africa this year will produce only 1,500,000 tons—about 400,000 less than it needs for domestic consumption.

"The effects of the drought are now known to be a lot more severe and are expected to last a lot longer than it was originally estimated," a Mozambican cabinet member said recently. "In January we said the drought was the worst in 50 years, but we are now sure that it is in effect the worst in history."

Southern Africa has always been a semi-arid region, and severe droughts recur there regularly. But before the late 19th century imposition of colonial rule in the interior, subsistence farmers were able to move relatively freely to escape drought. Today, private land ownership and international borders block farmers' movements, and poor farmers who cannot afford irrigation systems can do little more than watch as their fields dry up.

This year's drought appears to be part of a cyclical climate pattern and may well be the first of several dry years. But in this part of the world, it is hard to ignore the social aspect of natural disasters: inevitably, it is the rural poor who will be hardest hit.

Urban dwellers throughout the region

will be affected by the drought too. In South Africa, food prices for basic staples are expected to rise 15 percent this month, and electricity and water will be in short supply. This winter will not be easy for anyone without a steady income.

But in rural areas, where many farmers have harvested less than 10 percent of their normal crop, the drought's impact will be more direct. Farmers who cannot afford feed for cattle are already slaughtering their herds rather than watching them starve—or selling them at low prices to wealthier neighbors who can afford feed. Rural women—who in this part of the world are largely responsible for fetching water—will spend many more hours with buckets on their heads, searching for rivers that have not yet dried up. And of course, poorer farmers will find it difficult to get cash for food and other necessities.

The pattern is hardly unique to southern Africa. The World Bank's 1982 Development Report says, "Rarely...does famine result from a reduction in food production and affect all people in the area uniformly. Major groups of the poor, especially the landless, [are] extremely vulnerable to a sudden reduction in their earnings. In such cases, and particularly if prices rise suddenly, these are the people who starve."

But the disparity in the effects of drought are particularly evident in South Africa, where the apartheid system has allocated about 13 percent of the land area to the 70 percent of the population that is black.

Even at the best of times, infant mortality rates among rural black South Africans rise to 50 percent. This winter, a child will die in the black-designated *bantustans* every three hours from malnutrition.

The justification for apartheid is "separate development": blacks are supposed to be able to grow enough food in the bantustans to feed themselves. Even in the best of times, however, families crowded onto dry and infertile farmland only survive because of remittances from family members who go off to work in

white-owned industrial South Africa.

This winter, looking down from a small plane flying over South Africa, you can see the results of "separate development." It is easy during the drought to tell which fields are white-owned and which are in bantustans—the large, well-irrigated white-owned fields stand in stark contrast to the small dry plots of the bantustans.

Failed harvests mean that rural black South Africans—restricted from moving to the cities by South Africa's infamous pass laws—must rely completely on migrant laborers' remittances. Yet this reliance underlines the Catch-22 in which many South African families are trapped: migrant laborers are rarely paid much more than is needed to support a single man, since laborers' wages are only meant to supplement agricultural production in the bantustans.

A recent report on migrant labor issued by the main workers recruiting organization argued that this year's drought highlights a positive aspect of the migrant system. Remittances, the report argues, will keep rural families alive through the winter—an argument that cynically ignores the role that "pass" laws play in restricting blacks to impoverished rural areas.

The pass laws—euphemistically called "influx control"—are designed to stop blacks from moving to white-designated cities unless they are employed. A recent court decision could give migrant laborers the right to permanent urban residence, but even so, the government appears unwilling to allow their families to join them.

Food as political weapon.

Not surprisingly, given the extent of the drought, emergency food aid is quickly turning into a political weapon throughout southern Africa. In Zimbabwe, government officials have threatened to withdraw food aid from villages suspected of harboring "dissidents." Socialist Mozambique, where four million people could starve this winter, is finding it difficult to persuade Western countries to donate food supplies to ward off famine.

And in South Africa, bantustan "leaders" who have accepted nominal indepen-

dence from Pretoria—"leaders" who have been repeatedly denounced as corrupt and repressive by the people they are supposed to rule—have found they can use food aid to force people to accept their rule. In the recently "independent" Ciskei, for example—an area whose main product, like the main products of most of the bantustans, is cheap labor—bags of desperately needed corn flour (the staple food in southern Africa) are rotting in warehouses. Only card-carrying members of President-for-Life Lennox Sebe's Ciskei National Independence Party can get aid.

Joining Sebe's party means accepting the principle that blacks will no longer be considered citizens of South Africa, and as non-citizens, will have no rights in most of the country—except, of course, the right to work as migrant labor.

It is not unusual for bantustan leaders to link social services—health, education or even passes for migrant laborers—to their party membership. But during this drought, the depth of their cynicism becomes even clearer.

Like its bantustan-leader puppets, Pretoria seems likely to use the drought as yet another club over its neighbors. Already heavily dependent on South Africa's industries and transportation networks, the majority-ruled countries surrounding South Africa may find it difficult to act against Pretoria's wishes this winter.

Botswana, long one of the frontline states most supportive of the liberation movement, is in a particularly weak position during the drought. Half its population of about one million is already receiving food aid, and the country now depends on South Africa for all its electricity.

This winter, South Africa may not have to use military force to keep its neighbors from supporting the liberation movement's efforts. As leaders of Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other majority-ruled southern African countries pointed out at a conference held in Maputo in July, South Africa's economic hold over the region has rarely been more evident.

Jan Pager is *In These Times'* Africa correspondent.

Emergency food aid is turning into a political weapon throughout southern Africa. Zimbabwe officials threaten to withdraw aid to villages harboring "dissidents." Socialist Mozambique is finding it hard to get food supplies from the West.

By Fred Halliday

BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

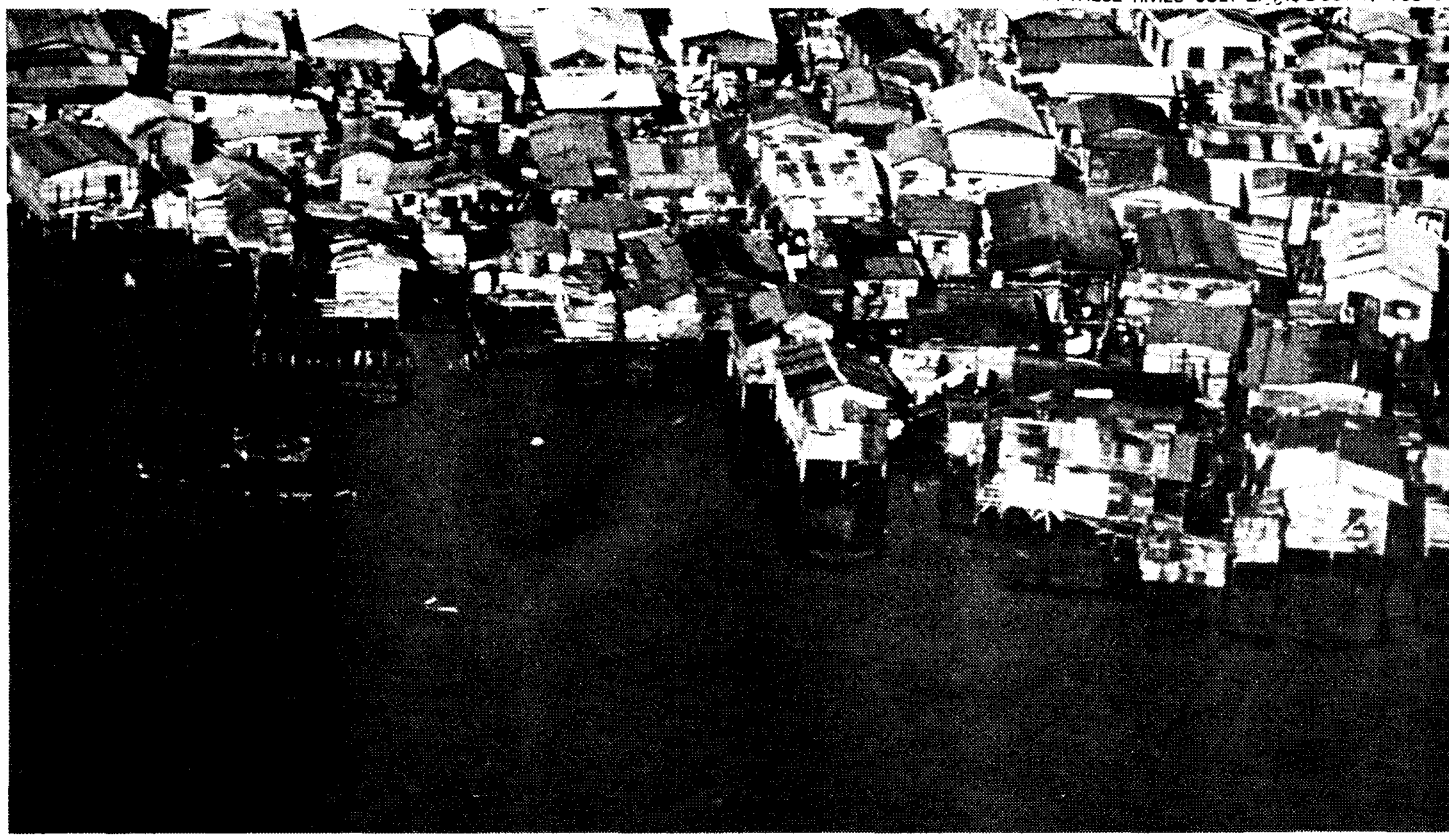
THIS COUNTRY HAS LONG ENJOYED a reputation as one of the most tranquil of Caribbean states. Ruled continuously by Britain for three centuries, it gained independence in 1966 and has since built close commercial and political ties with the U.S.

While the capital's suburbs sport such British names as Hastings and Worthing, the shops, restaurants and hotels resemble those in Miami. And in its search for allies in the Caribbean to press its anti-Communist policies, Washington has found few leaders more willing to cooperate than Barbados' Premier Tom Adams. The presence at the international airport of U.S. reconnaissance planes is a reminder of this understanding.

Yet things are not as they once were in the Caribbean, even in the English-speaking islands that house about six million of the region's more than 30 million people.

Barbados' GNP fell in both 1981 and 1982, and the recession has hit tourism throughout the area, down 4.5 percent in 1981 and by a similar amount in 1982. The prices of the main commodities exported have also fallen—sugar by 50 percent since 1975, to a level below cost in many states. And output fell in 1982 to an overall production level that is the region's lowest in 30 years. Bauxite—the mainstay of the economies of Guyana and Jamaica—has also fallen in price and output. And unemployment has been accentuated by the recession in the industrialized states that once took surplus population.

At the same time, the Caribbean has become more important to the U.S. Long regarded as a traditional preserve of U.S. foreign policy for general strategic reasons, the region had little economic significance until recently. But the rise in U.S. oil imports has placed the Caribbean in the forefront of U.S. economic concerns, both because of the volume of oil refined there—in Trinidad, Puerto Rico and the Dutch colony of Curacao—and because so much of U.S. imported oil passes through the region. This concern about shipping was accentuated by the 1978 signing of the treaties with Panama that will, by 1999, cede ownership of the Canal to that country. This loss of control has sparked alarm among U.S. rightists, whose concerns are reminiscent of the panic prompted by the loss of the Suez Canal in Britain and France in 1956. These developments might not be so im-



CARIBBEAN

Area turmoil hits stable Barbados

portant were there not also a changed political mood in the Caribbean islands and in the four non-Hispanic mainland enclaves—Belize, Guyana, Surinam and French Guyana.

The first breach in the pattern of pro-Western rule in the region was the Cuban revolution of 1959. Yet for all the anger that it provoked in Washington, this challenge was successfully contained. An attempted left-wing rising in the Dominican Republic was crushed by U.S. Marines in 1965, and Cuba's attempts to encourage guerrillas on the mainland of Central and South America failed.

The cases where left-wing forces seemed able to win or retain power through the ballot box were also thwarted by CIA funding of the opposition in Guyana in 1964, encouraging a military coup in Chile in 1973 and backing the right-wing opposition in Jamaica in 1980.

Yet in the past four years challenges of

a less containable kind have emerged: the New Jewel insurrection in Grenada in March 1979 (see story below), the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in July 1979 and the left-wing coup in Surinam in March 1980. The latter is the first successful insurrection in the English-speaking Caribbean, and has established a government that contrasts with the prevailing pattern of corruption and broken promises found elsewhere in the islands. The Nicaraguan revolution has transformed the political situation in Central America at a time when popular movements are gaining ground in El Salvador and Guatemala and when the foundations of the Mexican state—a remote descendant of the revolution in 1910—appear shakier than ever before. Unable to invade Cuba outright, but haunted by the defeat of Vietnam, the strategic planners of the Pentagon are now set on undermining and then overthrowing the Nica-

raguan government, which has become the focus of their enmity toward Third World liberation movements. CIA operations have been considered against both Grenada and Surinam.

The military regime in Surinam—a former Dutch colony of around 350,000 inhabitants—has many of the contradictory features associated with military juntas of a left orientation: a tendency to ward demagoguery and brutality on the one hand, a persistent redistribution of wealth and defiance of foreign pressure on the other. Bound in an unstable alliance with radical civilians, it could either consolidate itself as another link in the revolutionary chain in the Caribbean or collapse into the kind of repression that marks its English-speaking neighbor, the Guyana of Premier Forbes Burnham.

Yet the new radicalism is not confined to the states where left regimes have come to power. In Haiti, ruled since 1957 by the Duvalier dynasty, a Christian opposition has broken into the open and is openly challenging the regime. In Puerto Rico, ruled by the U.S. since it was seized from Spain in 1898, unemployment is now more than 30 percent and nationalist sentiment is on the rise. In Jamaica, polls now show that Michael Manley's People's National Party would win an election, despite the fact that it went down to a clear defeat in 1980.

Many of the smaller English-speaking islands—Antigua, Montserrat, St. Vincent's, Domenica and Trinidad—are experiencing the emergence of new radicalized groups, which often recruit young people, that do not accept the prevailing norms of political life inherited from colonial days. In the three French colonies—French Guyana, Guadeloupe and Martinique—the incorporation of the islands as parts of France, giving them seats in the French national assembly, has offset any nationalist tendencies. But even here, discontent is growing and new guerrilla groups, calling for independence, have emerged in recent months.

The Caribbean has long suffered from political constraints limiting the impact of those seeking to break ties with European and American domination—the weakness of the local economies, the fragmentation not only between different linguistic groups in the Caribbean as a whole but between islands speaking the same language, the solidity of the local dominating classes that have sought continuity with the colonial powers.

Yet the Caribbean has also seen some of the most epic upheavals of modern history: the first colonial revolution in the Third World, that of Haiti in 1804, and the most explosive confrontation of East and West in the postwar period, that over Cuba in 1962. The combination of strategic alarm in Washington and growing popular unrest within the Caribbean indicates that once again the choice between these two paths is being posed rather sharply.

*Fred Halliday's most recent book, **The Making of the Second Cold War**, will be published this month.*

Center-stage revolution

ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA—At first glance, the capital of "Free Grenada" does not give the appearance of being that of a revolutionary state. There are no posters and banners calling on the masses to rise or condemning the revolution's enemies—only sedate statements of where taxpayers' dollars have been spent.

The tourist restaurants and hotels much of the economy relies on remain in private hands. And although tourism is down as a result of the general depression in trade and hostile propaganda about the island, yachts with tanned North American visitors still anchor in the volcanic harbor. Security also appears slight—no curfew, no roadblocks, no exchange controls. The only overt sign of the Soviet presence is a World War I vintage biplane at the airport.

Yet things are moving in this beautiful, mountainous island with a population of about 100,000. The New Jewel movement that came to power in March 1979 has begun a radical program of social and political transformation, the first in the English-speaking Caribbean. With funds raised abroad and bonds sold to nationals, the state has financed a large-scale construction drive, building schools and health centers, repairing roads and, most impor-

tant, creating a new international airport that will for the first time give tourists direct access to the island.

At the same time, wide-ranging social changes have taken place. Unemployment has been reduced from around 50 percent to around 15 percent. Inflation has fallen from 25 percent to 7 percent. Imports remain uncontrolled, but the government has encouraged the processing of fruits that were usually exported raw and has boosted textile manufacturing. The three staples of the Grenadan export

New Jewel movement planned an insurrection against the dictatorship of Premier Eric Gairy. This was successfully carried out on the morning of March 13, 1979, when the True Blue barracks near St. George's and the police and radio stations were captured with little resistance. Even those who criticized the government's current policies agree that in ousting Gairy the New Jewel leadership had the support of virtually the entire population.

The Grenadan leaders, headed by Premier Maurice Bishop, appear well aware of the mistakes made by other revolutionary leaderships in the world. They are low-key and careful, avoiding the demagoguery that can be heard in other militant capitals. They have won the

Grenada's leaders are low-key and careful in the face of U.S. hostility.

economy—bananas, cocoa and nutmeg—have suffered from serious price falls in recent years, but the government hopes to counter this by boosting tourist income and increasing manufactured exports.

The ideology of the New Jewel movement grew out of the black power and Marxist atmosphere of the early '70s. It was founded in 1973 by university graduates educated in the U.S. and Britain. After being denied electoral victory in a rigged election in 1976, the

support of Cuba and the Soviet Union, but are determined to maintain links with France and Britain, and are still persisting in a dialog with the U.S. They know, from the Cuban example, that nationalization of urban and tourist services can precipitate enormous problems. Instead, they have sought an alliance with the local merchants, and three non-party representatives of business sit in the cabinet.

Without saying so, the New Jewel
Continued on following page

Continued from previous page

leaders practice a kind of latter-day Jacobinism—trying to introduce reforms into a long-depressed society and raise the political awareness of the population. At public meetings around the island and through the broadcasts of Radio Free Grenada, New Jewel officials explain the aims they have and the problems they encounter. Such measures as free health and education are popular and require less explanation. A new insurance levy of 4 percent on income requires more, as does the right of the police to choose their own uniforms—a democratic opportunity the latter have used to don themselves in clothes reminiscent of the colonial era.

Where the New Jewel movement is not Jacobin—but where it has also learned from the experience of other revolutions—is in the area of human rights. Despite the corruption and violence accompanying Gairy's rule, there have been no executions of any political opponents since the New Jewel movement came to power. Nor are there any cases where it has been demonstrated that torture has been used. A number of people arrested at the time of the insurrection and in subsequent actions are still being held under preventive detention, but many have been released over the past year and the number held in preventive detention is now around 56.

The New Jewel has been heavily criticized elsewhere in the Caribbean for not holding elections, but a government commission of five members set up in June is now drawing up an electoral law and, when it presents its report in two years, elections will be held.

There has been little internal turmoil since the revolution. Three major cases of sabotage have been reported, but the real benefits—honest government and economic improvement—have won the regime widespread support. Not even its strongest critics accuse it of corruption, and the GNP rose by over 4 percent last year, making Grenada one of the only cases in modern history where a revolution has been followed by an immediate rise in the standard of living. Now all hopes appear to be set on the opening of the international airport in 1984, an event that will open the island to a tourist inflow from Europe and thus, it is hoped, stimulate further economic growth.

But the Grenadan revolution also operates under serious constraints. The island itself has no mineral resources, and in past decades the majority of its inhabitants have emigrated to work elsewhere in the Caribbean, North America and Britain. Reliance on tourism and crop exports means that the economy remains liable to large fluctuations and to the continued ravages of the recession. The ability of the New Jewel government to maintain the support of the population will depend as much on economic success as on its reputation for honesty and defending national independence.

Even more serious are the political threats that Grenada faces from the outside. The U.S. has been consistently hostile since 1979, and Grenadan officials believe their country, along with Cuba and Nicaragua, is in the line of American fire in the region. The CIA is known to have considered a plan to overthrow the regime in 1981. And President Reagan on television in March attacked the construction of the airport that, he claimed, was designed for use by Cuban and Soviet planes. The U.S. has also encouraged other Caribbean islands to take a hard line against Grenada regarding aid and trade and to press criticisms of political detention and the postponement of elections. And the most pro-American press in the area—in Jamaica and Trinidad—has led a consistent campaign against Grenada and its revolution.

Yet, short of an outright and overt invasion, there is little prospect of the

U.S. being able to subvert the Grenadan government. A new 1,000-strong army has been created, equipped and trained by Cuba. A much larger number of people—up to a fifth of the total population—are in the militia. And Reagan's denunciations have strengthened a current of island patriotism that is one of the government's greatest assets.

In response to the criticisms made abroad of its policies, the Grenadan government has made it its policy to invite all who want to come and examine the revolution for themselves. —F.H.

Farmers

Continued from page 7

food industry. Agriculture is not considered to be as important as industry. The 'better' farms (by which state policy makers mean larger farms) get aid to build more capacity. The small are aided in getting out of farming. The economic infrastructure is increasingly geared to larger farms.

As in France, the established farm union is following the state's efforts to move toward bigger farms. So Reimer and others have organized an opposition that publishes a newspaper called *Bauernblatt*, which has a circulation of 2,500.

In Italy the National Federation of Italian Farmers has 1.4 million small- and medium-sized farmers in a nation that is

still predominantly rural. "We represent 20 percent of all Italian farms, 54 percent of the active farm population and 42 percent of all farm production in the country," said Errico Jannone, president of one of the Federation's regional units.

The goal of the Federation, according to Jannone, is to guarantee revenue to the farmer and provide abundant, good quality food at a reasonable price to the consumer. Jannone called for a complete change of EEC rules, including an end to subsidies that favor large farms at the expense of small ones. He also argued for price guarantees that reflect the varying conditions for cultivators in different locales.

The declining franc, for example, makes subsidies relatively expensive to the French government, and relatively low to farmers, as compared to other countries.

Asian farmers report that land is increasingly being claimed by corporate interests. A new law in the Philippines gives any corporation employing more than 500 people the right to own farm land in order to grow food for its employees—which means that small farmers are being forced off of sparse cropland.

The Japanese government has written plans calling for the elimination of 90 percent of the nation's farms in the next 25 years as part of an industrial development thrust, according to Sugawara Shohei. The head of the Farmers League, Shohei spearheaded a 12-year drive to prevent farmland from being appropriated for Tokyo's new Norita airport.

Canadian farmers' reported they recently won support for their opposition to foreclosures from Ontario's Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan. They hope to pass a Farmers and Creditors Adjustment Act that would force lenders to negotiate a debt readjustment before any farm is foreclosed.

According to Allen Wilford, organizer for the Canadian Farm Survival Association (CFSA), "By renegotiating debt, you save the costs of litigation and auctions and social dissent. Plus, you keep the farm producing, which injects money into the economy. Overall, it is cheaper than foreclosing."

In addition, Wilford said, foreclosures would send land prices plummeting because there are a string of potential buyers. "If farmers lose their equity, they can't borrow. And then the bank suffers even more." Wilford's logic convinced several Ontario bankers to write off as much as half of some farmers' debts.

Canadian farmers have also tapped firm support from labor. Dennis McDermott, resource director for Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) said the CLC, the nation's largest labor organization, is supporting farmers in a "low-key" way by sponsoring meetings on foreclosure actions throughout the province. McDermott also criticized the high profits of the Canadian banks, saying, "Lending income in the major Canadian banks is up 20-30 percent. One Canadian bank had a \$339 million income last year and obtained a \$29 million tax credit. This is obscene."

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Government by the People

A Movement in Search of Leaders

What can the people do when their government rejects all pleas for nuclear sanity? Our bipartisan administration has no will for peace, nor has any administration, Democratic or Republican, in decades. The military-industrial establishment is in charge, masters at the game of politicking, and it regularly overrides public opinion.

We only assume that government responds to public pressure. Of course politicians want our votes, but their very careers depend on party support. They dare not defy their big-money backers, though we write and write.

Couldn't the people do better than the politicians on most issues—if we had any power? Among us we have more than enough ability, but we've never tried anything really basic, or had such urgent cause.

Our country needs a strong opposition party, with power to nominate and elect officials to represent our needs—power to defeat the warmongers and other exploiters. This could be the breakthrough we've been looking for.

The new party could nominate for president a peacemaker like George Kennan—a candidate who would never be accepted by the Dem/Rep establishment. The new Congress could refuse funding for armaments and other boondoggles; it could refuse the special favors that giant corporations have come to expect, so there need be no question of nationalization. In fact, plain common sense could solve most issues if it weren't for big-money politics and the general awe of officialdom.

The Political Machine

We lost our long campaign against MX. The House democrats who voted the funds explained that they couldn't expect party support for 1984 if they opposed MX now. We may blame PACs or the "imperial presidency," but it

Principles for a Grassroots Party

- Action must be based in a great grassroots movement, growing from disillusionment and need—a movement with the dedication we give to our special causes, big enough to represent all kinds of people and every honest cause, broad and solid enough so that no extremist fraction can dominate.
- The party must not be organized from the top or around a preselected presidential candidate.
- It must select candidates to represent many different groups. It must nominate and support hundreds of them, for both houses of Congress and for state and local offices.
- Its platform must be a clear and simple commitment to peace and human rights, based on justice and common sense. Each decision must be made democratically, by the people's Congress.
- Organization and fund-raising must be minimal. We need a clean break from old notions about politics. A people's movement.

This must be a new kind of party, not to be judged by past failures and surely not to be rejected automatically with the old "can't win" alibi. We must start big, with enough faith in our cause to make it work.

comes back to big-money politics. It's Big Business that profits from nuclear subsidies and military contracts. It's Big Biz that lobbies appropriations through Congress and regularly defeats any liberal measures. And it's Big Biz (practically inseparable from the Dem/Rep political machine) that fills up our ballots with its yes-

men and decides important issues backstage, before we even hear of them. It targets incumbents it can't dominate, and only those who capitulate keep their seats, as Alan Cranston did in 1980 with his TV support for increased military spending. What a powerful tool for controlling decision-makers at all levels of government!

The mere existence of an alternative party could free responsible legislators, even mid-term, from such control. Manipulation of elections depends on a two-party monopoly of the nomination privilege. A third party could break up the racket by nominating and supporting strong competing candidates. **We can't dislodge big money from its domination over the two old parties, but we can offer the country something better: a new party that represents the people and responds to their needs.** We can limit the power of the giant corporations by weakening their political tool.

It all starts with the nominations. Here, at the start, is our only entree to the electoral process—our one opportunity to claim the representation we need. **The nomination prerogative is the key to political power.*** If we use it effectively we can put big money out of our government by putting in enough unbought officials to shift the majorities in the people's favor. But we can't use that key until we create our own Grassroots Party, with the right to put the people's unbought candidates on our ballots. Our majority of votes is of little use unless our ballots offer candidates worth voting for. "Splitting the vote" needn't be an issue, because both democrats and republicans take instructions from the

*The key power of nomination was an insight of the late congresswoman Jeannette Rankin.

Unions

Continued from page 3

The most successful "union busters" claim they win more than 90 percent of the time. But some employers regret hiring professional union fighters because the client—not the consultant—is usually held responsible for illegal campaign actions. In the Milwaukee case, the NLRB found that MM orchestrated the hospital's campaign, but held the hospital solely responsible for violations.

A Philadelphia clothing retailer was the apparent victim of bad advice from Cabot's firm. During an organizing campaign he fired union supporters and falsely identified supervisors as bargaining unit employees. Convicted of perjury for submitting doctored documents to the NLRB, he sued the law firm for damages, charging that one of Cabot's partners coached him on violating the law. Last spring, a judge threw the case out of court, declaring that he would not reward perjurers "with a great deal of money for their criminal conduct."

Fighting back.

Stephanie Flack, an aide at a Watertown, N.Y., nursing home, is one of the labor movement's pioneers in its counterattack on union fighters like Cabot and Melnick. Flack knew very little about unions when a friend invited her to an SEIU organizing

meeting in 1981. "I was scared, I was shaking the first day I stood outside the hospital and handed out a leaflet," she remembers.

In a campaign orchestrated by Modern Management, nursing home supervisors disrupted patient care as they tried to intimidate workers, Flack says. In the days before the union election, nurses' aides were being called away from their posts every day to hear speeches against the union and to meet one-on-one with supervisors.

"You had to take shortcuts, just washing the hands and face of a patient who needed a full bed bath," she says. At times she and other workers were called before they even finished washing or feeding a patient.

Flack's union beat MM because its members prepared themselves thoroughly. They studied the methods used in past MM campaigns. They publicized the fact that the hospital was paying \$800 a day for each consultant, more than some workers earned in a month. They put out advance warnings on management's likely next pressure tactic.

Flack, now the union's chief steward, said unionization has changed the nursing home. "There's a lot more pride in our work because workers now know what's expected," she said. "I think the administration and the supervisors miss the control they had over the workers, even though they're getting more output from the individual workers."

Sixty-five miles south of Watertown, in Syracuse, 92 women at the nation's third

largest insurance company, Equitable, made history in February 1982 when they won union representation in the previously non-union firm. (See *In These Times*, March 30, 1983.) Equitable workers concerned about low wages, arbitrary promotions and possible health effects from their video display terminals organized a union committee that met in secret for six months before publicly petitioning for a union representation election. By the time management "put out the usual 'don't sign that [union representation] card' letter, 70 percent of the office had already signed," said organizer Cheryl Schaeffer.

Yet electoral success has still not resulted in a union contract for Equitable employees and they now face the prospect that the giant insurance firm will transfer its Syracuse operations elsewhere. Workers know they face a difficult battle, and some are worried that their labor involvement will be held against them if they have to find other jobs.

But as one worker put it, "I still think [unionizing] is the best thing we could have done. Management didn't have to pay any attention to us at all until we joined the union. Now at least they have to think twice about everything they do to us."

Labor organizing's future.

Unionist and managers alike see "white collar" and "pink collar" workplaces as the major organizing battlefields of the '80s. Despite tremendous obstacles facing pro-union clerical workers, corporate officials have strong grounds for fearing an

office workers revolt.

Though few observers outside the labor movement realize it, for the past two decades unions have grown significantly only in fields where women workers are concentrated. In the '60s and early '70s, unions experienced their greatest growth among teachers and other public sector workers. Since 1974, when federal law first guaranteed health care employees the right to organize, hospitals and nursing homes have been the leading arena for new union organizing.

As a result, about 30 percent of today's union members are women, up from 20 percent a decade ago. Moreover, a 1977 Labor Department survey—the most recent study of its kind—showed that among workers not in unions, women were more interested in organizing than men.

"Looking at the situation historically, you can see some real basic changes," says Barbara Rahke, who heads the United Auto Workers Academic Council and is spearheading a union organizing drive among clerical workers at Cornell University. "There is a growing awareness among clerical workers that they really are workers and not management, the still growing impact of the women's movement, the growing number of single parents in the workforce, whose economic needs are enormous."

Labor's influence among private sector office workers remains largely untested. Unions have some significant strength among clerical workers in health care and education, but employees in the big paper shuffling, information processing white collar "factories"—the banks and insurance companies that employ millions of office workers—have not successfully organized.

The government estimates that clerical workers in these firms remain 97 percent non-union. A 1980 survey revealed that only 29 of the nation's 14,000 commercial banks are organized.

"When you talk about organizing clerical workers, you have to look at the situation industry by industry," Rahke says, because the problems are different in each. On college campuses, she said, isolation is a big problem. "Secretaries may work in the same building and never even run into each other. To the extent that they identify with other people, it may be the department or the person they work for, and not other people with the same job."

In the insurance industry, management's ability to move work from place to place—creating white collar "runaway shops"—may prove the most serious obstacle to unionization. At a company like Equitable, computerization means that workers operating video display terminals anywhere in the country can call up information from the same computers. District 925 has already responded by launching a nationwide organizing drive and District 925 organizer Schaeffer thinks employers are foolish to believe they can use trickery or intimidation to block union organizing by underpaid, ill-treated clerical workers.

"Their assumption is that clerical workers are easily led and easily bamboozled by either side," Schaeffer said. "Clerical workers are extremely intelligent. Employers are wrong if they think they can set up facades to make people tolerate abuse or make them believe they are getting good treatment."

Schaeffer and other successful organizers argue that unions must rely on the intelligence and dedication of rank-and-file workers if they are to overcome management resistance. Unions that wage "top down" staff-controlled organizing campaigns can rarely counter a consultant's carefully planned efforts to intimidate pro-union employees and convince undecided workers that the union is a greedy outside organization interested only in collecting their dues payments.

Nonetheless, as District 925's Equitable campaign has shown, even the most effectively organized union effort can be stymied by management stalling and legal maneuvering.

Steve Askin is Washington bureau chief for the *National Catholic Reporter*. (With research assistance from Barbara Yuill.)

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same big-money interests. We switch parties in our search for change, but neither party has given us any acceptable solutions. Jimmy Carter started with an antinuclear program, but he weakened under political pressure, even before election time.

Yes, we "elected" Ronald Reagan, but *we did not nominate him*. Surely we can run a more significant campaign and do better than his 27%.

Simplistic? Perhaps, but basically realistic and desperately needed. We're in big trouble, and it's very, very late. **How can we solve any problem without correcting the cause—the two-party machine and the power of the military-industrial establishment?**

Our few independent legislators are regularly outvoted. If we manage to elect "a good freshman class," few of its members survive the next primary. It will take a new party—a Grassroots Party—to make this fundamental change.

Solutions for our problems "must come out in the form of political power exercised by an aroused people who insist on taking their lives back into their own hands."

—George Wald

Campaign Tactics

The great power of the people could have significant influence if only we would get together — Labor, public-interest organizations, blacks, women, antinuclear groups, and all the others.

We can be a force to reckon with if we focus our energies on the main issue. None of us can go very far alone, but there are millions who share similar problems and can contribute priceless effort, talents, ideas, enthusiasm, and new contacts. Whatever our cause, we all need a government that listens to its citizens and makes common-sense decisions.

Those who control the nominations can dominate the government, and our nation might be ruled by common sense rather than by privilege. We need leaders to show disillusioned thousands that responsible government could be within their reach through the key power of the nomination.

We have already accomplished wonders. We've been doing an impressive job for years, but we've taken on an impossible assignment: facing industry's giants with our simple truths. **We still hope, but we never quite succeed. How can we win a whole nation by separating groups and issues that are so basically interconnected?** See how the great corporations stick together.

How to tell our prestigious organizations that they squander our dedicated efforts on crisis after crisis? These campaigns only divert us from the underlying problem. We should be using our energies and our zeal to win new power for all our causes.

Our organizations have taken on a great leadership responsibility. We trust them and follow readily, but a fresh perspective on the national scene would show that they have little influence over official policies. **They lack the first prerequisite for any real success — political power.** Yet we could have that power if we would focus our collective efforts, *ad hoc*, on building the political base we all need—a great Grassroots Party. Now, while people are seeking solutions, let's involve them in tangible and creative action—circulating new-party petitions. We're experienced with petitions. They're a great way to reach people, everywhere.

There's no need and no time for much organizing. Some states have early primaries and most

have stiff election codes. If we get busy now, we can just meet deadlines for qualifying the new party. A race with time can add excitement to our movement. Time enough to organize when we really have a party!

Any small group could start a campaign, with concurrent actions:

- Arrange for drafting and printing legally valid petitions to meet the special requirements of each state.
- Arrange for at least one distribution point in each state.
- Publicize the need for a Grassroots Party—immediately—at every rally and gathering, large or small. Share meetings already scheduled. Spread the fire of renewed hope.
- Try to revive student activism and leadership with this dynamic new idea.

What is anyone actually doing to take the profit out of militarism?

I hope and trust that a number of leaders will bring their organizations and branches and networks into a supermovement to gain the clout that not even our coalitions can quite muster. They could rise to new levels of leadership and influence. They could provide some very fine candidates, to publicize their special issues in the campaign forum and to represent their interests in the government.

I hope and trust that some of our influential speakers will find a Grassroots Party so urgent and so feasible that they will help promote it—soon and convincingly.

A few respected members of Congress could boost the petition drives by announcing their candidacy on the Grassroots ticket. This could be an opportunity for Ronald Dellums (already targeted with a blatant smear) and for other targets, past and present.

But first some group must start the petitions. We can't give up without even trying.

If you can lead, please write or phone:

Jocelyn Tyler • 260 Lighthouse Avenue, #A • Pacific Grove, California 93950 • (408) 372-3606



The Marxist modernists of *Partisan Review*

Writers and Partisans: A Partisan Review Reader

Edited by Edith Kurzweil and William Phillips
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 326 pp., \$11.95 (paper)

By Thomas De Pietro

IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO A POPULAR, semi-official anthology called *Proletarian Literature in the United States* (1935), the Communist Party's literary arbiter Joseph Freeman set forth the Bolshevik-inspired proletarian aesthetic: "...art, an instrument in the class struggle, must be developed by the proletariat as one of its weapons."

And that bulky anthology attests to the fact that by mid-decade many novelists, poets and essayists had formed a new literary canon distinguished both by its righteous identification with the toiling masses and its commitment to the destruction of capitalism. Erskine Caldwell, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, Tillie Olsen (in those days Tillie Lerner), Horace Gregory, Langston Hughes, Kenneth Patchen, Muriel Rukeyser, Richard Wright, Clifford Odets, Malcolm Cowley and Meridel Le Sueur: all these familiar contributors to the anthology attempted to resolve the distinctly modern conflict between art and revolution by uniting under the rippling banners of the noble working class.

But buried in the back of the book was

an essay entitled "Recent Problems of Revolutionary Literature," which celebrated proletarian fiction while warning against literary "leftism." This tendency in revolutionary literature, the at-that-time unknown authors argued, steeped "literature overnight in the political program of Communism [and] results in the attempt to force the reader's responses through a barrage of sloganized and inorganic writing."

The young authors of this subtly dissident piece, William Phillips and Philip Rahv, had only a year earlier (in 1934) begun to edit *Partisan Review*, the magazine that was an official organ of the John Reed Club of New York, the largest chapter of a national revolutionary writers organization. In an excellent new anthology, *Writers and Politics*, Phillips (still *Partisan Review* editor in his late 70s) and Edith Kurzweil (the current executive editor) cull from *Partisan Review's* subsequent 50-year history an impressive sampling of essays. The articles chosen continue this and other still vital political debates.

Toward unorthodoxy.

The editorial statement in *Partisan Review's* first issue—which editor wrote it is still a matter of dispute—pledged the magazine to the orthodox Communist aesthetic: its viewpoint would be that of "the revolutionary working class." The editors promised to "participate in the struggle of the workers and sincere intellectuals" against oppression, imperialism, fascism and the dying system that "breeds these evils." Poised for battle with "the decadent culture of the exploiting classes," *Partisan Review* also took on as one of its "principal tasks" the defense of the Soviet Union.

Although Freeman and other Party members joined Rahv and Phillips on the masthead, the two young leftists quickly assumed editorial control, edging the magazine toward their unorthodox position. In those early days, *Partisan Review* offered social-realist fare typical of the "leftism" warned of by Rahv and Phillips: stories of working-class conversion and revolutionary redemption. But Rahv and Phillips had begun formulating their counter-aesthetic in short book reviews and essays; their contribution to *Proletarian Literature in the United States* first appeared in *Partisan Review's* third issue.

While the editors rigorously engaged the aesthetic challenges posed by literary proletarianism, events conspired to make

this task irrelevant. In 1935, the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International announced a new political tactic, the Popular Front, which, among other things, called for an alliance between American Communism and New Deal liberal capitalism.

The cultural consequences of this quest for political respectability soon became clear. The John Reed Clubs, with their commitment to proletarian revolution, were replaced by the League of American Writers, with its tepid policies designed to attract potential fellow travellers—writers who were not Communists but who would support the Party's programs. Cut loose from institutional support (which had never supplied enough money anyway) and uncertain of its cultural role, *Partisan Review* floundered, appearing briefly in a larger format as *The Partisan Review and Anvil*. But this merger with a Midwestern proletarian magazine failed to absorb the aftershock of the Party's sudden change in cultural policy. After six issues that featured a number of politically unorthodox writers (e.g. Ignazio Silone and Andre Malraux), *Partisan Review* folded.

If the sudden turnabout in policy involved with the Popular Front suggested to Rahv and Phillips the political expediency inherent in art subjugated to propaganda, the Moscow Purge Trials confirmed their suspicions of Stalin's totalitarian designs. When *Partisan Review* reappeared in December 1937, they were joined by anti-Stalinist, independent leftists such as Mary McCarthy, Dwight Macdonald, F.W. Dupee and the painter George L.K. Morris, who paid the bills for a while. They announced in the opening editorial: "We think that the cause of revolutionary literature is best served by a policy of no commitments to any political party." Marxism, for them, was transformed from a series of crude slogans and formulas into a sophisticated "instrument of analysis and evaluation." They further pledged themselves to the defense of all that was valuable in the intellectual tradition—the "high culture"—of the West.

From the start, *Partisan Review's* editors boldly delivered on their promises. Captivating stories and poems by Delmore Schwartz, Wallace Stevens, Elizabeth Bishop and James Agee appeared alongside penetrating literary and social criticism by Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling, Harold Rosenberg and Meyer Shapiro (none of whom, unfortunately, is included in *Writers and Politics*). Dur-

ing the Popular Front intellectuals' political, aesthetic standards, *Partisan Review* about "a rapprochement" between modern literature and the independent inclination to unfettered

The editors of *Partisan Review* claim that their politics and literary position since the '30s—a sky.

Although short-lived Trotskyist demagogues by all readers' position detailed *Literature and the Revolution* though Macdonald's attack on the F. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was, for a few Trotskyist on the critical position at



News Pictures



TWO GENERATIONS OF LITERARY LEFTISTS

Illustrations: left,
George Bellows; center
and right, from *The Masses*



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Writers and Politics
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Rebels in Bohemia, The Radicals of *The Masses*, 1911-1917

By Leslie Fishbein

The University of North Carolina Press,
270 pp., \$24.50

By Karen Rosenberg

THEY WERE YOUNG WITH THE century, the men and women who worked on and around a little magazine with a mighty title, *The Masses*. Some of their names are still remembered—John Reed, Eugene O'Neill, Max Eastman, Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger. But it was a place, New York's Greenwich Village, more than a magazine that they made famous. It became known as "the Village," symbol of leftist politics, small theaters, feminism and all-around bohemianism. The image attracted many aspiring rebels—generally white, middle-class, college-educated, American-born "out-of-towners," as they say in New York.

Even Columbia University professors and high society matrons were curious about what was happening in the Village, for radicalism of *The Masses* variety was almost chic. One Fifth Avenue resident, Mabel Dodge, provided eats and drinks to bohemians willing to mingle with the wealthy. Her fat scrapbooks were filled with newspaper clippings; when artists and radicals attracted sufficient notoriety they might receive an invitation to her salon. It was a rebel's paradise—you could be accepted for being different. (John Reed was accepted by Dodge as her lover in 1913, though he later left her for another love, revolution—in this case the one erupting in Mexico.)

Were they just playing at politics? No, they had serious causes. But they could mock their own pretensions in dramas and comedies, which they then staged, and in stories. Jocular camaraderie was a large part of the strength of Village radicalism. It was a shared sense of humor and the ability to have fun as a group that held them together, as much as anything else.

And they were a remarkably cohesive collection of individuals. The "new women" among them—Susan Glaspell, Ida Rauh, Crystal Eastman, Harriet Rod-

man, Neith Boyce—were a support-group long before the term had been invented. They helped each other to defy conventions: to keep their own names after marriage; to write and to publish; to take part in campaigns and demonstrations for birth control, suffrage and peace; to attend post-graduate professional schools; and to earn a living. Because they were excited about a total reform of society—in praxis and theory, public and private life, culture and industry—they were open to each other's special interests. It was a community in which women and men could try to learn from each other.

Friendship also helped make Greenwich Village into a network. Stella Ballantine, Emma Goldman's niece, knew Eugene O'Neill; Eleanor "Fitzi" Fitzgerald edited *Mother Earth*, Goldman's journal, while managing the Provincetown Players theater group. As for the connections provided by spouses, lovers and ex-lovers—well, it was a bedroom farce with a limited number of characters. The code of manners was called free love.

Yet the title of one memoir by an ex-villager suggests that there was less freedom than one might imagine (or wish): Hutchins Hapgood's autobiography is called *A Victorian in the Modern World*. Alas, it was not so easy to break conventions, even when Marx and Freud are on your side. Leslie Fishbein, in her book *Rebels in Bohemia*, is impatient with these rebels for having contradictory ideas and behavior. Admittedly, it's disappointing to see they promised more in artistic achievements, political theorizing and sexual liberation than they delivered.

Disappointing, but not surprising. Few are blessed with artistic talent in any era. As for sexual mores, these rebels can't be expected to think and act like our contemporaries. (I bet Louise Bryant never propositioned Reed in the terms and tone Diane Keaton employed in *Reds*.) In matters of doctrine, they were enthusiastic eclectics with few concerns about "purity." But I disagree with Fishbein that they weren't "genuine Marxists."

One reason *The Masses* didn't bother much about being "politically correct" is that the journal flourished before the American left was fractured by questions about the United States' role in World War I and the Bolsheviks' role in the Russian Revolution. Those were the days when the weekly *Appeal to Reason*, which boasted Eugene Debs as a contributing editor, had a circulation of nearly a million. With a circulation of about

14,000, *The Masses* spoke to a more elite group, but through its humor and its reporting, it conveyed the sense that it was part of a larger movement that might well transform the nation, even the world.

We now know of the deportations, the arrests, the suppression of magazines including *The Masses* that began with the U.S.' entry into World War I. The Palmer raids are only the most famous part of a longer period of repression, just as McCarthyism is only one segment of the post-World War II red scare. In retrospect, the optimistic politics of *The Masses* may seem rather naive. Fishbein suggests that the group should have known that to bring about social change one needs discipline, deep commitment, a clear political direction and the ability to forgo personal pleasures.

Bohemian pitfalls.

While Fishbein is acutely aware of the pitfalls of eclectic bohemianism, she seems much less worried about the dangers of political dogmatism and self-denial. She repeatedly asks *The Masses* crew for discipline—sometimes it is scholarly rigor ("intellectual discipline"), sometimes the ability to obey a higher authority ("revolutionary discipline"), sometimes dedication to a genre such as the novel ("a disciplined art") instead of the journalistic essay and sometimes a spartan lifestyle ("ascetic discipline"). I don't believe *The Masses* crowd was as deficient in these qualities as she thinks; it's incredibly hard work to produce even a light-hearted journal, book or play. If these men and women lacked staying power, forsaking Greenwich Village radicalism for the country life, uptown commercialism or their own private concerns—well, people can give only as much as they are capable of, for as long as they are capable of giving it.

If *The Masses* offered a vague understanding of socialism to artsy-craftsy lifestyle-radicals, then this was its limitation, and also its contribution. The anonymous poem from that era that prefaces Fishbein's study goes: "They draw nude women for *The Masses*/ Thick, fat, ungainly lasses/ How does that help the working classes?" A broad-based movement can support many periodicals aimed at its different segments, and it may well be a sign of the vigor of American socialism in the early 20th century that it produced *The Masses*.

Karen Rosenberg's article on Emma Goldman's unpublished letters appeared in the summer issue of *Dissent*.



Below staff:
left, William
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EDITORIAL

To Reagan, 'we' does not mean the American people

Ronald Reagan is attempting to do in Central America what a string of presidents from Harry S. Truman to Richard M. Nixon tried and ultimately failed to do in Indochina. He is trying to prevent a nation struggling in its own way to escape the brutality and oppression of a military dictatorship from determining its own future. And, as American presidents did in Vietnam, he is doing so in the name of freedom, supposedly to protect what he calls "the budding democracy" of the bloody regime in El Salvador—a government so feared and hated by its people that it probably could not survive a month without the economic and military aid pouring in from the United States and its surrogates.

Like his predecessors, who insisted that American intervention in Vietnam was a defense against Chinese expansionism, Reagan promotes intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua as a defense against diabolical Soviet expansionism, a source of evil so powerful that operating at third hand—through Cuba and then through Nicaragua—it has allegedly been able to inspire rebellion in El Salvador and bring it to the verge of victory. But unlike former presidents, who could generally count on the "uninformed loyalty" of the American people on foreign affairs, this administration—according to various polls and public opinion expert Edward R. Tufte—faces "uninformed skepticism and informed hostility" to its attempts to keep Central America safely within the empire.

This is the legacy of Vietnam that is bemoaned by liberal and conservative cold warriors alike, and it is the reason Reagan found it necessary to set up the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America with Henry Kissinger as its head. The Commission is not an attempt to develop policy on Central America. It is part of a coordinated public relations campaign, launched in early June, to persuade Americans, in the *Washington Post's* words, that the president's efforts to "counter Communism in Central America are vital to American security."

The Reagan scenario has two themes, neither of which has anything to do with the administration's underlying motives. The first—designed for those liberals always concerned with the purity of other peoples' revolutions—is that the Sandinistas are "betraying the revolution." This rationale for military action against Nicaragua was presented at a meeting of the American Policy Outreach Group of the White House office of public liaison a month or two ago by two Somocista guerrillas and has since become one of Reagan's favorite rhetorical devices. On July 18, speaking at the International Longshoremen's Association Convention—appropriately enough in Hollywood, Fla.—Reagan talked about guerrilla bands fighting in Nicaragua "to restore the true revolution and keep the promises made to the OAS [Organization of American States]." Always the friend of "true revolution," Reagan went on to ask: "Isn't it time that all of us in the Americas worked together to hold Nicaragua accountable for the pro-



mises made and broken four years ago?"

The second theme is more traditional, but though equally fallacious is more complex. In the words of the *White House Digest*, a new publication to be distributed to voter groups, it goes like this: "If we cannot defend ourselves there, we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble and the safety of our homeland would be put in jeopardy." Reagan stressed this theme in announcing the makeup of his Bipartisan Commission last week.

Of course, that argument was used in promoting American intervention in Vietnam, used *ad nauseum*. We lost there, but the safety of our homeland far from being put in jeopardy was enhanced—because the loss there made it much more difficult for subsequent administrations like this one to put the full power of the United States in the field against the people of the Third World. Similarly, a defeat of Reagan's plans in Central America can only strengthen our democracy, our relations with the majority of the world's population and ultimately our security.

Of course, if one accepts the new cold warriors' view of the Soviet Union as an evil empire bent on destroying American democracy, then the proximity of Central America, as compared to Vietnam does make a difference. But even in those terms there is no threat to the United States. The idea of an invasion

It does mean the pro-corporate oligarchs of Central America.

from Nicaragua and El Salvador is ludicrous. The Soviets have agreed to keep nuclear missiles out of the area and that agreement is constantly monitored by the U.S. And, in any case, in a nuclear war missiles from Central America would be superfluous. Soviet ICBMs and submarine launched missiles would be more than adequate to obliterate us.

Underlying principles.

A look at the language of the *White House Digest* gives a clue to Reagan's underlying principles. When the *Digest* talks about defending "ourselves" in

Fidelistas fought against in Cuba, what the Sandinistas fought against in Nicaragua and what the Salvadoran guerrillas are fighting against in El Salvador. And it is what Reagan is fighting to defend.

From Reagan's point of view, which is to say from the point of view of our corporate ruling class, defeat in Vietnam was a blow of some significance. But its real meaning was not that the defeat strengthened the hand of the Soviet Union—because it hardly did. The real defeat was in the weakening of popular support at home for the corporate policy of neo-colonialism. It was a defeat for the idea that American administrations could impose their will and their system on the non-industrialized nations in the name of a spurious freedom.

Similarly, in Central America there is no real Soviet danger. True, Soviet aid has made it possible for the Cuban revolution to survive and directly or indirectly is making it possible for the Sandinistas to survive. And there has probably been some trickle of Soviet arms and supplies to the rebels in El Salvador, although how much and how important such aid is cannot be determined.

All of that is to the Soviet Union's credit, because each of these revolutions has been a genuinely popular uprising against a corrupt and brutal regime. In each of these instances the United States has ended up on the wrong side, not out of stupidity or misjudgment, but because the American government has been controlled by the same class that ruled in each of those countries. And because American administrations, if not the American people, are class-conscious.

But Reagan's Cold War rhetoric does have a certain resonance with the American people because of the oppressive and undemocratic character of the Soviet regime and because of its iron-fisted domination of Eastern Europe. With the administration's new public relations campaign in high gear, and with the Bi-

partisan Commission seeking a consensus among elected officials, the majority of the American people opposed to military intervention in Central America may well be frustrated. After a secret session of the House last week—only the fourth such debate in 153 years—Rep. Bill Anderson (D-Ark.) said he remained convinced the Reagan administration "has a hidden agenda, undisclosed to Congress and the American people, and while talking about peace in the region it is seeking a military victory."

The pressure is on Congress now. The majority of Americans do not want another Vietnam. But while it appears safe to say that the majority would not support the administration's true aims, it is not at all clear that Reagan's public relations campaign will fail. During the Vietnam war, a constant escalation of anti-war demonstrations kept pace with the escalation of the war. The demonstrators led public opinion to the point where it became a major brake on Nixon's and Kissinger's plans. So far, the much greater anti-Reagan sentiment has not been manifested in commensurate public opposition to his plans. A start was made by the 10,000 demonstrators who went to Washington July 2, but it was not yet enough.

Similarly, when the *White House Digest* talks about the need "to prevail elsewhere" it doesn't mean to achieve peace and international equality. To prevail means to gain ascendancy, to come out on top.

And it is no accident that Reagan's people think in those terms. In Central America the United States has been on top since the 19th century. In the rest of the world, except in Eastern Europe and China, it has been on top since the end of World War II. Indirectly, that is what the

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

BEST WAY?

A RECENT ARTICLE ON THE GERMAN Democratic Republic (*ITT*, May 24) leaves one with the same impression one gets from the establishment press—that no peace movement is permitted in the GDR, that peace activists are not permitted to demonstrate in the GDR or to join demonstrations in other countries. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The GDR proudly proclaimed immediately after World War II that for the first time there is a part of Germany from which war will not emanate. Since then the fight to preserve peace has been part of the program of the GDR.

On World Peace Day, when 750,000 people marched in New York City, millions of citizens of the GDR participated in public meetings, rallies, etc. (in a country whose population is 14 million). More than 42,000 meetings were held at industrial plants. All 6,000 schools and colleges observed World Peace Day. At that time there was established the "GDR Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War." There was also a delegation from the GDR Peace Council to join our New York demonstration.

Unfortunately, these activities were never reported in the American press. They are not interested in publicizing the support of millions of people for the socialist policy of preserving peace. They are only interested in confrontation. They print isolated instances of activities of those who would destroy the government of the GDR, such as those who call for unilateral disarmament, aware that the GDR stands at the border between the socialist and capitalist worlds, with weapons, nuclear and other, over the border aimed at them and controlled by our president, who has proclaimed that the good Lord has bade us to fight the "Communist Evil." They are well aware of our government's efforts to overthrow the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, Chile, et al. and realize that to disarm unilaterally would mean the end of the GDR, which of course they would like.

Nowhere in your article about protesters in the GDR do you mention that there are no nuclear weapons in East Germany, while the greatest density of nuclear weapons in the world is in West Germany, where our government plans to deploy even more.

Any publication sincerely interested in furthering the struggle for peace must know that the greatest danger to war is the mindless anti-Sovietism of Reagan and the war-mongers. The best way to further the cause of peace is to spread the word that the people in the socialist world want peace, that having suffered the catastrophe of World War II (in which the USSR lost 20 million of its citizens, Germany six million), their determination to fight for peace is unshakeable.

—Mary Kalb

Vice-President, U.S. Committee for Friendship with the GDR

UPPERMOST

I WAS INTRIGUED BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE's review of *War Games* (*ITT*, June 29). She draws an excellent point at the end of her essay: America has to grow up. Yet, despite the touches of realism that grace its plot, *War Games* is more a modern allegory than a comic scenario—an allegory of a civilization obsessed with adolescent fantasies of

invulnerability, security and omnipotence.

War Games is sometimes compared to *Dr. Strangelove*; but a more apt comparison is to another computer tale, *Colossus, the Forbin Project*. Both *War Games* and *Colossus* revolve around super-computers which, their creators believe, will deliver the ultimate in security and invincibility and which subsequently behave contrary to their masters' wills. The similarities are striking and I am surprised that Aufderheide didn't pick up on them. Unlike *War Games*, the *Colossus* script didn't pull any punches. The American super-computer, Colossus, soon discovers a brother computer in the Soviets' Guardian and they unite as one. Modern humanity must suffer the consequences of its utopian fantasies of universal mastery and control as the two computers establish a despotic millennium over the earth through control of all nuclear weapons. In the end, Colossus' creator asserts his freedom with a defiant "no," superbly underlining the final irony of the movie: it was for the sake of securing freedom that the Americans built the thing that would enslave them. As "the voice of world control," Colossus drives home the lesson of the ultimate disaster of our utopian madness.

If there is any lesson from these cinematic tales for those who labor for a more just America, it is that the task of

educating Americans to renounce the Promethean-New World dreams of national invincibility and omnipotence ought to be uppermost on any agenda for radical reform.

—Bruce Tuttle
Modesto, Calif.

INSULTED

I AM INSULTED BY CHUCK FAGER'S reference (*ITT*, June 29) to abortion in this country as "just another form of birth control" and "a matter of convenience...in a large percentage of current cases."

I don't think it is just another form of birth control when it costs \$100 or more and may involve a trip to another city and always involves invasion of a woman's body (even more than the IUD) and almost always produces troubling emotional reactions. Maybe for the man it's just another form of birth control, but few women (none that I know) see it that way.

As for the question of convenience, again, what looks like convenience to a man—does he care how the woman he knocks up spends the rest of her life—is often a question of a woman's freedom to live the rest of her life as she wishes. This isn't convenience to me or to most other women; it is essential to our life as free adults.

Chuck Fager should be a little more careful in the way he characterizes the often agonizing decisions women face in a world still unwilling to grant them the freedom of choice and opportunity permitted to men.

—Ann Tattersall
Eugene, Ore.

MODEST PROPOSAL

I'D LIKE TO OFFER A SOLUTION TO dilemmas like that of Agnes Mary Mansour, the ex-Sister of Mercy who now heads the Michigan Department of Social Services, which disburses money for abortions.

Mansour opposes abortion; she also wants to provide state services equitably. The dilemma: in a state that considers it a "service" to abort the poor, how do you provide services "equitably" and still in fact "oppose abortion"?

Here's my proposal: any pregnant woman who qualifies for aid should be given a cash grant equal to the cost of an abortion—say, \$150—with no strings attached. Many women would make a down-payment on an apartment, pay toward maternity/baby expenses or make a myriad of choices other than abortion.

The state would thus empower women with more real choices, would escape the objection of moral complicity by providing no money to abortion providers directly and would respect both "choice" and "life"—and not only "life," but "quality of life."

Who'd oppose this sort of proposal? Those who have a financial stake in the abortion business and those who, for reasons of their own, think it's better simply to abort poor and minority people.

Public reaction might lead to some interesting conclusions as to who's "pro-life," who's "pro-choice" and who's simply pro-abortion.

—Juli Loesch
Erie, Pa.

IF YOU'VE SEEN ONE TEXAS CITY...

YOUR NEWSPAPER IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE sources for information on the democratic left in the United States.

However, I have some trouble accepting David Moberg's June 29 article on Houston as authoritative when it is accompanied by pictures of Dallas! All Texas is not alike, and the residents of each city take pride in their unique skylines.

—Lorraine P. Levine
Houston, Texas

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PERSPECTIVES

Peace groups fight deadly symbiosis

By Joanne Landy

HARD-LINE MILITARY policies by the superpowers serve only to escalate the arms race and exacerbate hostilities. By contrast, the peace movements East and West are mutually re-enforcing. The emergence of independent peace groups in the Eastern bloc, groups that function in the face of government suppression, are undoubtedly a response to the peace movements in the West which are, in turn, strengthened by the courage of their Eastern counterparts.

Witness the recent history of the independent Soviet peace group, "The Group to Establish Trust between the US and the USSR," and its leader, Sergei Batovrin who, ever since he helped found the group in June 1982, has faced systematic government harassment that included a month of psychiatric imprisonment. When offered "permission" to emigrate last month, Batovrin reluctantly agreed. Officials warned this would be his last chance to leave, and the threat of renewed persecution hung over him if he remained.

Upon arriving in Vienna the 26-year-old Batovrin did not rush to express his gratitude to the Reagan administration for its military buildup and its plans to deploy MX, Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles. Instead Batovrin explained he hoped to come to the U.S. soon because "lots of my friends are in the U.S. fighting for peace."

And in fact Batovrin's group has found important allies among American and European peace groups. Western activists, including members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Wyoming-based Ranchers for Peace and women from England's Greenham Common peace camp visited the Trust group in Moscow. When Soviet peace group members were threatened for claiming the right to conduct grassroots peace dialog among ordinary citizens of the East and West, peace activists across the U.S. protested with demonstrations, telegrams and



Millions of Soviets participate in official peace demonstrations, like this one in Irkutsk, but the dissidents claim this movement only perpetuates the arms race.

delegations to Soviet consulates. Trust members believe these efforts forced the Russian government, anxious to allay criticism by Western peace groups, to release Batovrin from psychiatric prison.

Western peace groups' protest against persecution of Batovrin and his colleagues have been part of an emerging process of building reciprocal support and understanding between Western and Soviet-bloc peace activists. Independent

peace groups have sprung up in East Germany and Hungary. In the GDR peace sentiment first surfaced in 1981 and by last year a substantial movement had developed, sheltered by Protestant churches. The East German peace people demand an end to conscription and a withdrawal of all foreign troops from all countries. Hungarian independents met in Budapest on June 12, 1982—the day of New York City's giant peace demonstration—to lay plans for an autonomous peace movement. Since then, they have continued to organize, especially among young people, and their movement has grown.

Western peace groups can claim some credit for the development and survival of Eastern independent peace movements. Activists in Moscow, Budapest and Berlin often say that they were inspired by TV pictures and news stories of masses of Western antiwar demonstrators. And once these Soviet-bloc peace groups had emerged, Western peace figures like Britain's Edward Thompson visited them, publicized their activities, and worked to protect them from government harassment through shows of solidarity and support.

In short, Western peace movements, by demonstrating in the streets and mobilizing opinion against their own governments, have begun to achieve within two years what three and a half decades of Cold War policy has not—the encouragement of groups within the Eastern bloc that challenge the race toward war by both superpowers. And in turn, the existence of these Eastern independents has helped Western peace movements refute the notion that Western militarism is necessary because there is no hope for internal antiwar pressure in Warsaw Pact countries.

Of course, it is true that as yet the Eastern independent peace movements are weak. They may fall victim to the cur-

rent Soviet-bloc crackdown against all autonomous opinion centers. But it would be cynical and self-defeating to conclude that there is no hope of reaching out to people in the East.

The very existence of the Trust group, which gained more than 1,000 signatures from Soviet citizens to its initial declaration, indicates the potential of independent peace sentiment in the East. Moreover, the fact that in Poland workers could organize 10 million into Solidarity suggests that more widespread independent activity cannot forever be contained in the Eastern countries.

Breaking the circle.

How can we in the West nourish these tender shoots of grassroots peace organization in the Soviet bloc?

Our leaders claim that present U.S. policy is the only practical strategy for resisting Soviet-style repression. But is not the opposite the case? Does not the USSR invoke American militarism and interventionism in countries like El Salvador to justify domestic crackdowns and continued occupation of the Warsaw Pact countries in a way similar to the U.S. government's exploitation of the deployment of SS-20s and the Soviet role in Poland and Afghanistan to justify its growing military budget? Is not the best way to strengthen peace movements in the Soviet bloc for their Western counterparts to force their own governments to break out of the military buildup cycle and initiate major unilateral steps toward disarmament and democracy?

By gaining popular support for such initiatives, peace groups in the West and East can give one another heart and help create a positive alternative to the deadly symbiotic military escalation that now characterizes U.S.-Soviet relations. ■

Joanne Landy is a director of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy East and West.

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PERSPECTIVES

Quality of education reports attack the wrong problems

By Norm Fruchter

THE QUALITY OF AMERICAN education becomes the target for improvement campaigns at least once a decade. Sometimes the underlying concern is national survival, as it was during the late '50s when the success of the Soviet Union's space program triggered a national commitment to upgrade our sci-

international competition, combined with the increasing inadequacy of our schooling, leads to "a conviction that a real emergency is upon us," (Economic Growth Task Force). "The skills that were once possessed by only a few must now be held by the many if the United States is to remain competitive in an advancing technological world," (Federal Policy Task Force).

All three reports define an effective education system as critical to the continuation of our international hegemony,

rather than as a failure of capital investment or worker productivity.

Second, investment in education is assumed to be beneficial for everyone, rich and poor, majority and minority. Human capital theory, which argues that individual investment in learning pays off in higher earnings across a lifetime of labor, structures this assumption. Given the pivotal role of information in the economy we are entering, everyone must invest in schooling (and in very particular forms of schooling) in order to guarantee

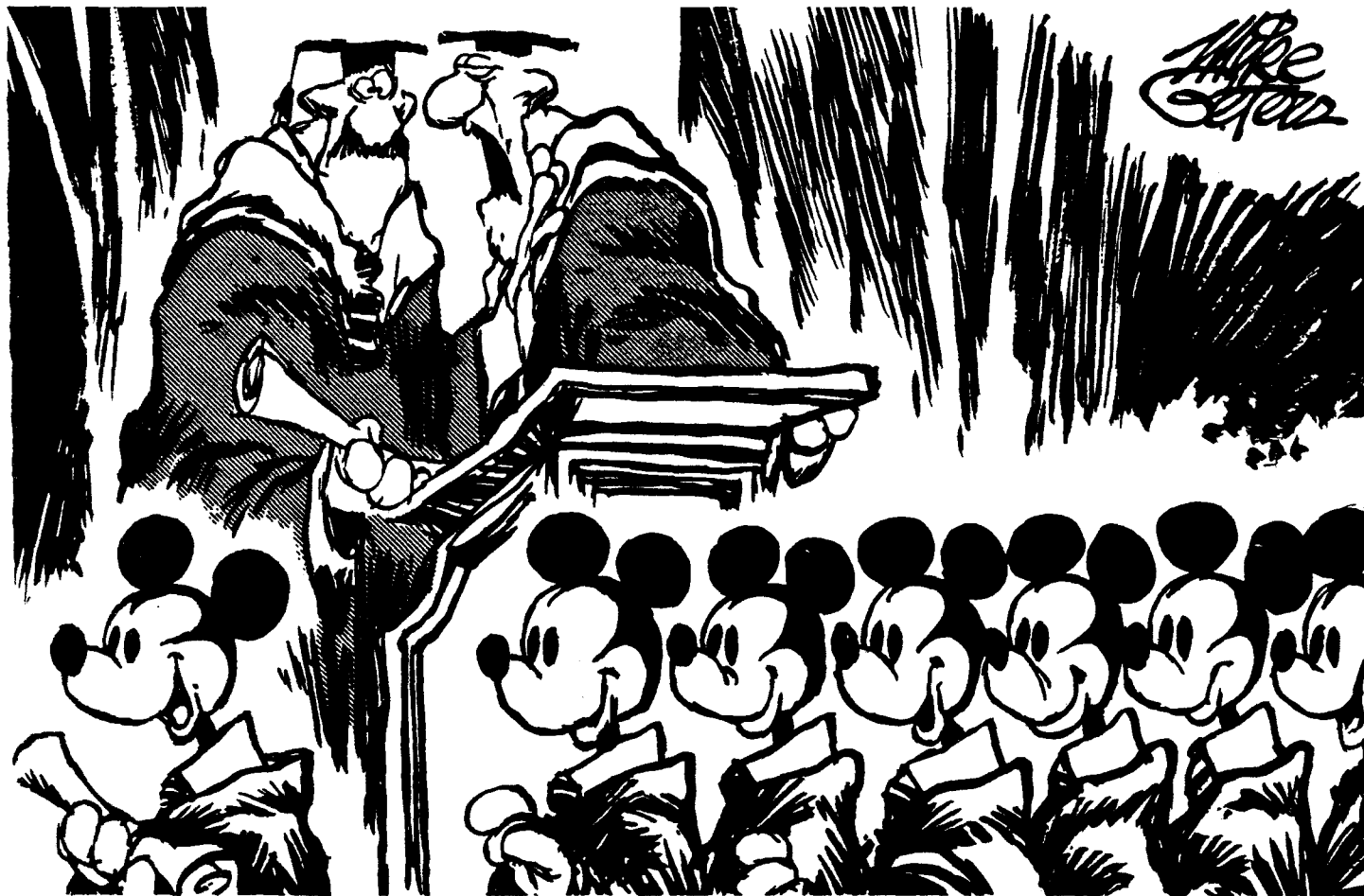
against investment in our own domestic industry. Suppose it is not our "high-tech" industries that are thirsting for more adequately trained labor, but our traditional heavy industries that are dying because of the failure of investment in research and development, re-tooling and expansion. Evidence of intensive capital flight from domestic industry is widespread; where is the evidence that our schools are not producing the trained labor our "high-tech" industries need to assure our continued global dominance?

Arguments about the beneficial returns of universal investment in education assume an information revolution that will reshape the entire economy. But suppose our economy is producing a segmented labor market in which certain kinds of skilled jobs (in traditional industries, for instance) are contracting while only "high-tech" and service jobs are expanding. Suppose, for many young people, especially poor and minority youth, the only jobs available are dead-end jobs for which no schooling is adequate preparation. It is easy to demonstrate that such secondary labor market jobs (characterized by low wages, few benefits or protections, minimal career opportunities) are expanding, while primary sector jobs (characterized by good pay, benefits and seniority) are contracting. It is much harder to demonstrate why youth facing a lifetime of such secondary sector employment should invest in education.

These reports attack the wrong problems because they reverse the direction of causality; the economy affects education far more than education affects the economy. To blame schooling for national economic decline is an entertaining but finally trivial diversion from the knotty structural problems plaguing our schools. Therefore the reports recommend only traditional bootstrap solutions that treat a diverse student body, segmented by race, class and gender, as a unified elite sector. Those recommendations will prove as ineffective as the reports' analyses in overcoming the critical problems facing education.

Effective reform might begin by considering the paradox that our success in achieving universal access to secondary schooling has produced a massive failure to provide effective schooling for all our new entrants. Whatever decline, in standards and achievement, has actually occurred among our traditional student sectors may be minimal when compared to our inability to deliver an effective and challenging education to the millions of students at the base of our educational pyramid for whom rudimentary access has only recently been secured. If our critical problem is actually defining and delivering effective mass education, as well as raising the achievement of our elite sectors, we are presented with a unique opportunity to shape an enriching and useful education for all our children.

Norm Fruchter was recently elected to District 15 Community School Board in Brooklyn, N.Y.



PROFESSOR... THAT STUDY'S RIGHT... WE'RE OFFERING TOO MANY MICKEY MOUSE COURSES...

ence, math and engineering education. Sometimes the root concern is equity, as it was during the middle '60s when federal categorical programs were introduced to improve the schooling, career opportunities and life-chances of poor and minority students. Sometimes concern focuses on whether schooling encourages children's growth and development, or hinders it, as the school reform movement argued during the late '60s and early '70s.

The reports issued by three prestigious reform groups—the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the Education Commission of the States' Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, and the Twentieth Century Fund's Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy—have helped to shape the current climate for school improvement. The underlying concern of these three reports focuses on national survival, defined as our economy's ability to compete successfully in the international marketplace. The reports insist that the failures of our education system threaten "our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation.... America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women [but]...no longer" (Commission on Excellence). The intensity of

and see the deterioration of our current schooling as creating "a nation at risk" in the global marketplace. "If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets," argues the Commission on Excellence, "we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system for the benefit of all—old and young, affluent and poor, majority and minority. Learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the 'information age' we are entering."

The reports make two interesting assumptions about the relationships between education and the economy. First, educational productivity is assumed to be the critical element in economic productivity. Our nation is defined "at risk" because our schools are failing to produce the highly trained, highly skilled men and women our economy needs to compete successfully in international markets. The press for more science and math teachers, for higher standards and advanced courses, is designed to increase our schools' capacities to produce more of the trained labor we need to stave off technological competition from other industrialized nations. In this linkage, education plays a supply-side function; economic productivity is assumed to be dependent on the quality of educated labor produced by our schools. Economic decline is defined as a failure of schooling,

economic success. These assumptions shape the current debate urging school reform and improvement.

But suppose they are wrong. Suppose our current economic decline is primarily caused by a capital strike—investment in mergers, real estate, other property speculation and industrial production in low-wage, less developed countries—

new left review

I39

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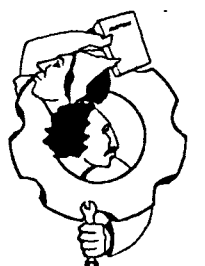
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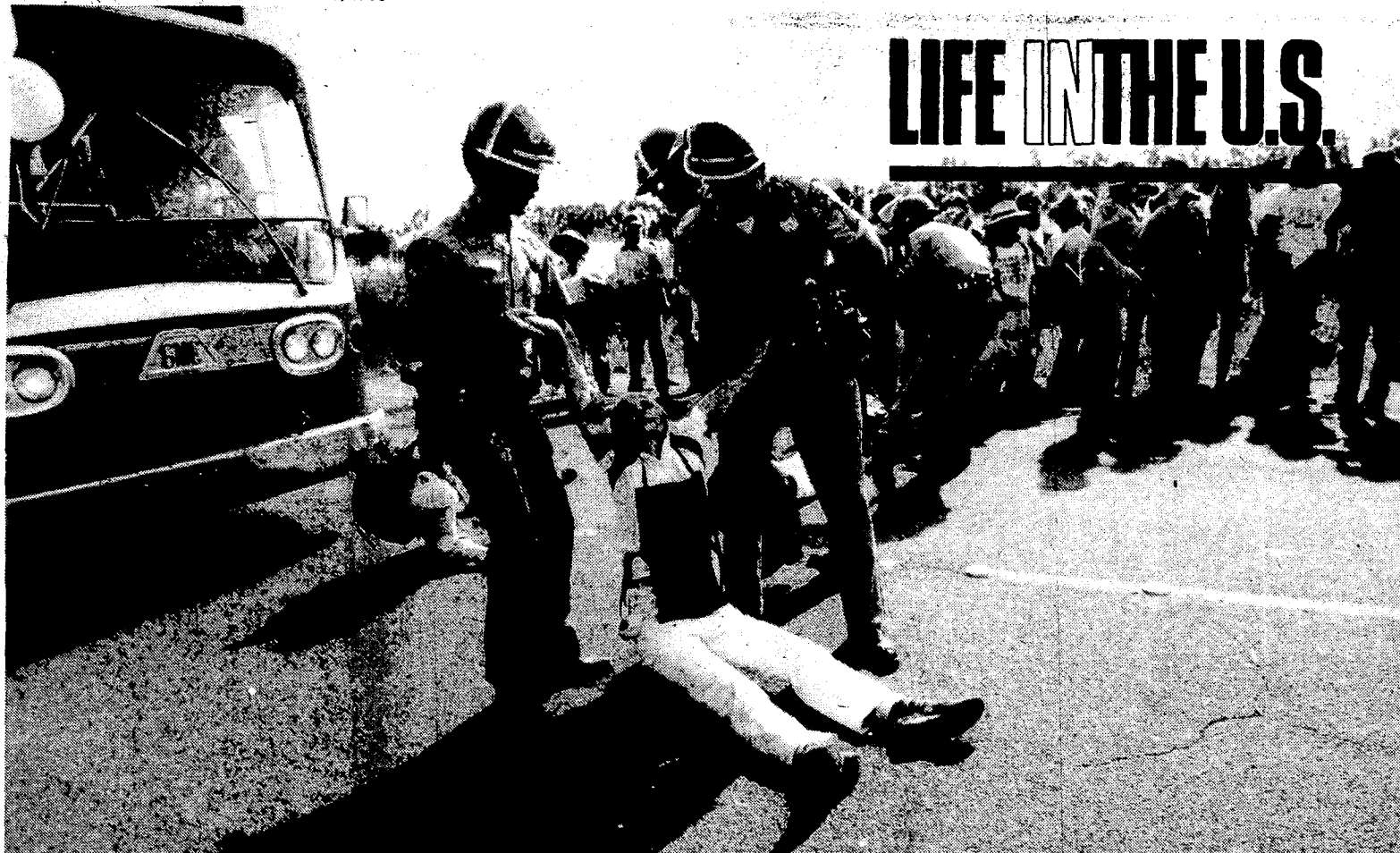
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LIFE IN THE U.S.

The road to Livermore.

cause of its insistence on the superiority of certain "feminine" qualities, but I was quite impressed by the form that radical feminism took at Santa Rita. "Feminine" qualities of nurturance and expressiveness were honored, but qualities of assertiveness and logical thought were also valued. I never once heard a statement of hostility to men in general, or of indifference to the situation of the men in the tents a mile away from ours. We were constantly on the phone with them, trying to work out common positions. When, in the last couple of days, we heard that asbestos had been found in the rubble around their tents, there was widespread sentiment that they should go to arraignment first. One evening, by arrangement, a large group of us gathered at the point in our compound that was closest to the men's tents, while they gathered at the point closest to ours. We sang to each other in turn, each group just barely able to hear the other across the fields. We sang not only "Solidarity Forever," but also more sentimental songs. Finally, we shouted in unison, "WE... LOVE... YOU!" And the men shouted the same back. I never thought that I would see a demonstration of this sort from a group heavily imbued with radical feminism.

The atmosphere of the camp was mutually supportive, often effusively so. There was strong support for open expressions of affection. Women readily hugged and kissed one another and spoke of their love for one another. Nor was this affection dependent on remaining in jail. In fact, efforts were made to reassure women compelled to leave because of responsibilities outside. After a few days, someone pointed out that our singing "Solidarity Forever" as women left for arraignment might seem to imply that these women were not part of that solidarity; it might make them feel bad. The next time we gathered in the tent and were invited to arraignment, we formed a human bridge through which the women who were leaving went, giving us a chance to hug or kiss them as they left. Only then did we sing "Solidarity Forever." We repeated this ritual every time we were invited for arraignment.

Decisions were made by consensus, not majority vote; a decision could not be made until consensus was reached in all the clusters. A dissenter could "stand aside," registering disagreement but allowing the decision to be made. If her disagreement was strong she could block the decision. Thus each woman in the camp had the power to prevent collective action. Two fundamental principles of this system were that the views of all were to be taken seriously and that formal leadership was to be discouraged. The membership of the council that spoke for the whole group rotated daily and members of clusters took turns facilitating (not chairing) cluster meetings.

This system of decision making would probably drive me crazy outside, but in Santa Rita the consensus system had virtue. Solidarity was greatly enhanced by the power felt by every woman in the camp. Consensus gives extraordinary power to minority views, but in Santa Rita the result was to foster unity rather than divisions.

Taking dissent seriously early on made it possible to work out

Continued on page 23

By Barbara Epstein

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

A letter from Santa Rita jail

On June 20 I sat down in one of the roads leading to the Livermore Weapons Lab—a University of California-supervised facility 40 miles east of Berkeley where about half of the nation's nuclear weapons are designed—and was arrested. More than 1,000 of us spent the next 11 days in the Santa Rita County Jail. I also have a \$240 fine to pay.

Presiding Judge John Lewis did his best to use this opportunity to break the wing of the Bay Area peace movement committed to civil disobedience. Instead, we turned the occasion into a victory. For a week and a half, I was immersed in a movement with which I had only fleeting contact before. I can't remember when I have learned as much in as short a time as I did in the "Santa Rita Peace Camp."

The Livermore Action Group (LAG), which planned the blockade, had urged us all to refuse to give our names when arrested. At a recent civil disobedience action protesters who had given their names had been "cited out" (given citations rather than being taken to jail). This enabled the court to set up individual trials and deprived those arrested of the opportunity to exert collective pressure to gain more favorable sentences. To avoid this, we forced the judge to send us to jail, even though we had no idea how long we would spend there. Most of us, those who had not given their names, spent the next week and a half as Jane and John Does.

We were taken to hastily constructed compounds, one for the women, one for the men, in the fields outside the Santa Rita Prison buildings. The women's compound consisted of a ramshackle warehouse and two circus tents erected the morning of our arrest. The warehouse was filled with stretchers and more stretchers and some cots were in one of the tents. Outside the tents was a patch of asphalt and a "lawn" of dirt and stubble, all surrounded by barbed wire. The men were placed in several circus tents about a mile away.

Probation protest.

Soon after we arrived the Livermore Action Group legal collective made its first visit; Judge Lewis, we were told, had announced that there would be no cite-outs except for medical rea-

sons. The next day another announcement came: Lewis, in consultation with the district attorney, had stipulated a sentence of 11 days in jail or a \$500 fine, plus two years' probation.

We were shocked by the 11 days or \$500—a major escalation from the three days in jail handed down after last year's protests at Livermore—but our greatest concern was with the two years' probation. For a thousand people to accept such a sentence would have put a real dent in the future of civil disobedience in the Bay Area, since probation would limit their activities in future protest actions. We decided to refuse arraignment until Lewis offered us a sentence without probation.

Judge Lewis undoubtedly believed that not allowing us to cite out of jail was harsh punishment. But by the time we had been in jail together for a few days a spirit rose from the group that enabled us to hold against the judge. From the first day on, we began meeting in clusters of about 25 each. As the decision-making structure was set in motion, we began to feel the power of 500 women (and nearly 500 men, a mile away but in touch with us by the 10 pay phones provided in each camp) refusing to cooperate with a hostile judge. We sang peace songs and freedom songs from the civil rights movement of the early '60s. The officials' daily invitations to arraignment simply reinforced our growing sense of unity.

Those few who did leave the camp and pled no contest (essentially the same as a plea of guilty) received Lewis' sentence of fine and probation. Those who pled not guilty retained the right to a trial and the option of changing to a plea of no contest later, should a better sentence be agreed upon. But one can leave jail on a not guilty plea only if one pays bail or is released on OR (own recognizance). Lewis was refused to grant OR to us, which meant that those pleading not

guilty had to come up with bail of anywhere between \$500 and \$2,000, depending on the number of counts charged.

We were fairly diverse in age, occupations, background—though not in race. There were only four or five non-white women among us. We ranged from a 17-year-old who had not admitted her age (juveniles had been released after arrest) to a woman of 80. The largest group by age was probably those in their mid-20s to mid-30s; but there were at least 20 in their 60s and 70s. From an informal poll we took

We refused arraignment until the judge offered a sentence with no probation.

of ourselves, it appeared that at least half had children at home, and the largest numbers had jobs in health, education or other public services. My impression, taken in part from women's self-identification in the Gay Freedom Day Parade was that lesbians made up about a third of the camp.

Conditions at Santa Rita were not particularly comfortable. Bright lights stayed on all night. The food was atrocious—mainly bread, poorly cooked spaghetti and macaroni. We spent much of our days in lines: for meals, for showers, for the telephones. There was no privacy. Several times a day the guards herded us all to one part or another of the compound. In spite of all this, there was little evidence of strain. I have been part of protest movements since the late '50s, and have never seen anything like the spirit of solidarity at Santa Rita. It held us together and carried us

from one day to the next; it seemed to make up for sleep, vitamins, protein.

The Santa Rita Peace Camp reminded me, in certain respects, of the peace and civil rights movements of the late '50s and very early '60s. The "movement high," described by participants in the very early civil rights movement in the South, created an atmosphere in which the left seemed to embody a human decency that stood in sharp contrast to the surrounding society. That somehow slipped away in the fury of protest against the war in Vietnam in the late '60s.

The spirited atmosphere was nourished by the support we received from the outside. On Saturday, our sixth day in jail, six thousand demonstrators came and linked hands around the lab. All afternoon we could hear them—first approaching and then leaving the demonstration, honking horns to express support.

That afternoon a helicopter flew back and forth overhead, pulling a banner that said "Give Peace a Chance." Throughout our stay, members of an East Bay Teamsters local honked their support for us every time they drove by on the freeway. The mayor of Berkeley held a press conference outside the jail.

The mutual respect and warmth that prevailed among the inmates at Santa Rita was rooted in an amalgam of philosophies and traditions—the most prevalent of which were non-violence, feminism (especially radical feminism), environmentalism and an anti-authoritarianism that led many to describe themselves as anarchists. Some of us with political experience reaching back to the New and even the Old Left played a role in shaping decisions, but the political tendencies that held sway was largely shaped by currents from which I have always felt removed. In Santa Rita, however, these tendencies appeared in their best, most unifying forms. Those calling themselves "anarchists" emphasized grassroots democracy, but did not bring with it the harsh individualism that often surrounds anarchist efforts. Many women saw political action through the lens of individual morality, but this was closely linked to an emphasis on community, including acceptance of differences within that community.

I have often found myself at odds with radical feminism be-

INPRINT

**Beyond the Wasteland:
A democratic alternative to
economic decline**

By Samuel Bowles, David M.
Gordon & Thomas E. Weisskopf
Anchor Press/Doubleday, \$17.95

By David Moberg

If the Democratic Party leadership is serious about providing an alternative to Reaganism and about solving the country's economic crisis—as opposed to finding a gimmick that might regain the White House—then they would take the last section of this book, refine it a bit, add a few items and run full-tilt on that platform. Alas, that seems unlikely.

But for the rest of us, economists Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf have provided a reform program linked to an analysis of the current economic troubles that should be a stimulus to productive debate.

The main outline of their argument is straightforward enough: the economy is not a simple collection of various technical inputs. It is instead a set of social relationships. The crisis that has developed stems from a breakdown in three areas of what they describe as pillars of the distinctive postwar corporate order—a *Pax Americana* that had been imposed on the world, an accord between capital and labor that gave workers in core manufacturing industries rising wages and benefits while corporate decision-making power went unchallenged, and an implicit agreement by the general citizenry that profit-oriented capitalism would serve social needs.

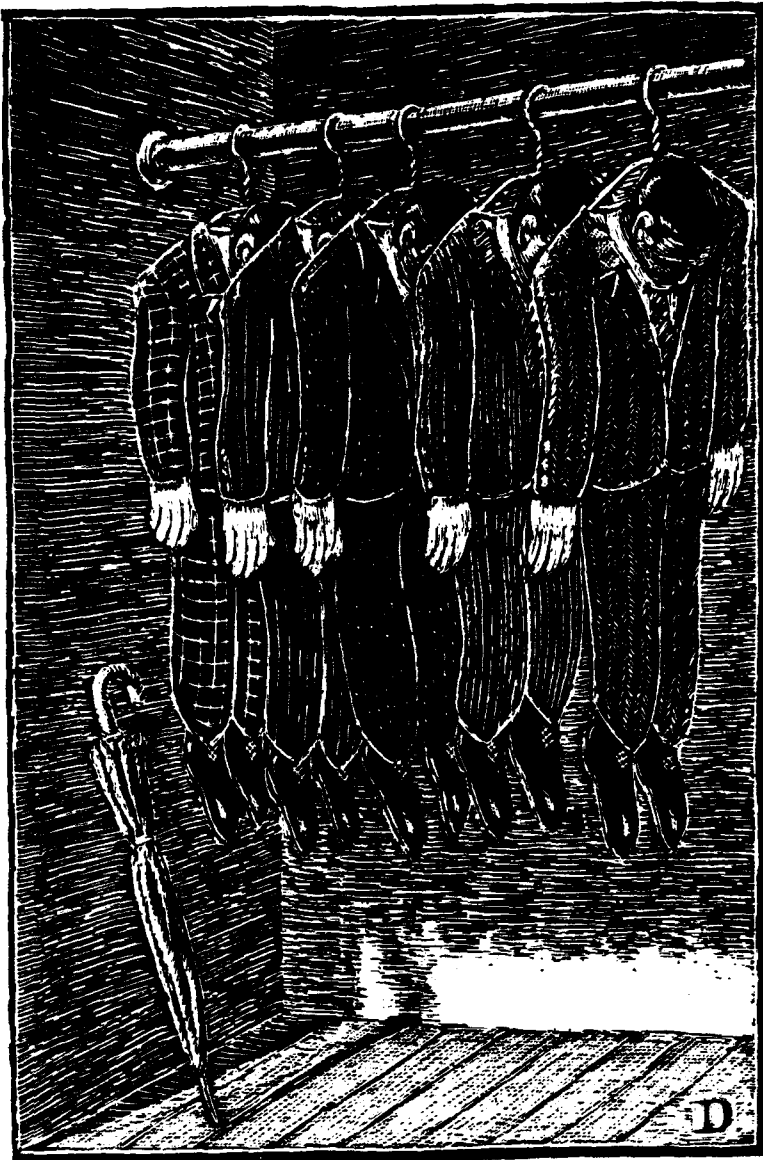
They do not blame big government, high wages, overregulation or even OPEC for the depressed and disoriented state of the U.S. economy. Contrary to some leftists, they do not believe that excessive profits or monopoly power is the problem. Most critically, they reject the notion that American business is in trouble because not enough money is available for investment. Indeed, they point out, for many years the economy has been operating with immense slack—an unused capacity of factories and an unused capacity of unemployed and underemployed workers.

Naturally it follows that they reject the argument that nearly everybody must tighten their belts so that the rich may have more, invest their bounty and get the machines of capitalism humming again. Not only does that not address the problem; it is also not the best way of stimulating investment. Furthermore, they reject the pop wisdom—embraced in the economics profession by such disparate voices as Milton Friedman and Lester Thurow (author of *Zero-Sum Society*)—that there is no free lunch.

A new recipe.

There is a free lunch possible, they say, and if that makes them sound like left-wing Arthur Laffer (the notorious inspiration of Reagan's "voodoo economics"), then their answer is simply that Laffer had the wrong menu, chef and kitchen. These cooks spell out their own recipe in great detail.

Yet they indirectly acknowledge that somebody does give up



Bob Dahm/NX © 1983

RECESSION

A blueprint to
fix economy

something for the free lunch; corporate managers must relinquish much of their power as democracy is extended over the economy and workplace. It is not simply out of dislike for corporate bosses that they make this argument. Their key argument is that the economic crisis stems from the costs to the American economy of maintaining corporate power.

Critics of capitalism have long argued that the system is essentially wasteful, an assertion that flies in the face of economic orthodoxy that believes whatever else capitalism may or may not be, at least it is the most efficient way of allocating resources. Rather than criticize capitalism in the abstract, however, Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf attempt to calculate how much waste the postwar corporate system generates.

In 1980, they estimate, an efficient, democratic, full-employment economy could have generated another \$1.2 trillion in useful goods and services—an increase of a staggering 50 percent over what was produced (or a corresponding reduction in work time). Quite a free lunch.

Where does all that waste come from? Like many of their more conservative colleagues, the authors—who teach at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the New School for Social Research and the University of Michigan—zero in on declining productivity as a consequence of the breakdown in the corporate system and the intermediate cause of economic stagnation. This decline started in 1967, the beginning of the first of three phases of decline following the postwar boom. (It was a time, they note, when investment was still rising rapidly.) Much of their

argument, however, hinges on productivity figures that are disputed; if the true degree of decline is less than they say, as some argue, their thesis is seriously weakened.

Worker productivity.

The rising prices that were part of the "stagflation" of the '70s resulted from the classic situation of too much money chasing too few goods, they write. But the problem was a decline in production of goods, not too much money.

They offer three principal reasons for why productivity growth slowed. Precipitating great consternation among their allies, they argue that the major cause of productivity slowdown from 1966 to 1973 was a decline in work intensity—a viewpoint reminiscent of the complaints of managers at the time that workers were not sufficiently under the lash of necessity and were therefore goofing off on the job. Competitive pressure also lessened, reducing the inspiration to innovate, and popular resistance at home and overseas to corporate domination raised business costs, they argue.

The waste from corporate control includes unemployed labor, excess supervision, wasted labor (workers fighting with the company or simply holding on to their jobs rather than being productive), failure to use existing capacity (and because opportunities to invest profitably are restricted by a sluggish economy) and underinvestment, as well as useless output. As prime examples of useless output they list military spending, inefficient energy policies (such as nuclear power production), food packaging and processing, excessive crime control (resulting from un-

Unemployment means the economy operates with immense slack.

employment), excessive health costs (resulting from a profit-dominated health system not oriented to preventive health care) and the favorite bugaboo of the left, advertising.

Faced with a breakdown in the postwar corporate system and declining profits, the authors argue, business responded with a stick—the Great Repression of tight money, cutbacks in the safety net, anti-unionism, induced recession, threats of capital flight. But this "cold bath" has worsened economic problems, even if it has battered labor, because business has taken a "cold bath" as well.

Since business strategies ultimately rely on this "repression," they argue that all are doomed as well as dismal, whether it is "supply-side" mumbo-jumbo, monetarism or the emerging "corporatism"—government and corporate cooperation in rearranging industry. (Corporatism might be represented by the Chrysler bailout, which provided much of the same discipline as outright bankruptcy—the more conservative solution—but in a more orderly fashion). More can be gained economically, they conclude, by extending rather than undermining democracy, by raising rather than lowering wages, and by increasing public control of the economy rather than giving business free rein.

Although the argument on the whole is persuasive, there are lingering weaknesses, loose ends and apparent inconsistencies that the authors do not always resolve. They deny, for example, that government regulation has cost business enough to account for its troubles—a reasonable conclusion. Yet at the same time they assert that citizen pressure for safety, environmental protection and the like is a major cause of the productivity slowdown. They argue that labor costs are not the problem, but the principle reason for productivity decline is declining labor intensity. Also, they argue that an improved social safety net and lessened unemployment threats in the '60s led workers to reduce intensity of work but deny that reversing the

most of them have not come as a result of innovative pressure. The index is thus flawed.

Finally, if their social model of productivity decline is correct, then maybe the Great Repression will work in the long run, with much hardship and inefficiency. Ultimately they resort to the argument that people will rebel and cause such chaos that it will fail.

Of course, there are more humane approaches. Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf argue that their more desirable alternatives will also work better than the business approach. I share their optimism, but I wish they would have addressed the issue of why the European economies that had adopted many of their prescriptions over the years and flourished more than the U.S. did during that time now suffer such serious problems. Is it simply because of the worldwide weight of the U.S. depression and high interest rates? Or does it represent an inadequacy of even their own laudable set of proposals? Is capitalism itself the problem? Are we caught in the downward drift of some inexorable "long wave"?

Modified capitalism.

Implementing their extensive, detailed and well-argued set of proposals would take us "beyond the wasteland" to a much better society—a modified form of capitalism or perhaps a step toward a democratic socialism (a concept the authors eschew). As an alternative to growth led by profit-seeking, reliance solely on markets for allocation of resources, and the expanded use of the military to enforce a new *Pax Americana*, they argue for an "economic bill of rights" that seeks growth led by rising wages and demand for goods, partially planned allocation of resources based on independent assessment of public and individual needs and worldwide cooperation for economic security.

Every individual would be guaranteed employment, although not necessarily his or her present job, since economic shifts are important. Indeed, like the Swedish labor movement,

They estimate a democratic,
full-employment economy
could generate another \$1.2
trillion in goods and services.

situation can get them to work harder again.

The authors have come up with ingenious new indexes of the social factors that they say led to productivity decline and economic crisis. Since concepts such as work intensity are so difficult to measure, one must be generous in judging the adequacy of these indexes. But some of them seem very strained. For example, innovation is measured according to the rate of bankruptcies, since competitive pressure will supposedly eliminate lesser firms. Their graph suits their argument fine, showing a drop in bankruptcies during the sluggish post-1967 period of decline. But the graph ends in 1979. In the following years, we have seen record levels of bankruptcies, and

they argue for pushing up the lowest wages faster (a "solidarity wage policy"), shifting workers into higher-productivity jobs and leaving some of the low-productivity jobs to foreign producers. They also argue for price controls (not wage controls) on corporations; violators of a uniform price standard would pay an excise tax into a fund used to help industries adjust to price shocks or other problems.

They argue for public control of all banks, public support of child care, equal pay for work of comparable worth, public support of community enterprises, greater worker information and control on the job through unions and other institutions, public planning, demo-

Continued on following page

Continued from preceding page
cratically elected community investment boards, democratic control of the Federal Reserve Board, reduced military spending (and public control of military production), public control of energy production and much more.

Although they do not favor long-term reliance on tariffs, they take the very sensible position—as Keynes did before them—that democratic control of the national economy cannot be left subject to the vagaries of international pricing.

Is this just another tax, tax, spend, spend approach? Not at all. They favor elimination of the corporate income tax (if other reforms were adopted), but they also want higher personal exemptions, elimination of tax deductions, a single rate for the first \$50,000 in income (with a rate 1.25 times that for higher salary income and double that for all property income). The result would actually be a reduction in taxes for most people and a smaller bite out of new Gross National Product than has been taken by Reagan's policies.

Naturally, the friendly skeptic may say: Great ideas, no chance of it happening. But there is undoubtedly more sympathy for this approach than most political figures are willing to acknowledge. Pushing such a program has an additional political advantage: the dispirited forces on the left of the American electorate can see that they do have an overall program for stimulating the whole economy, not just a grab-bag of "special interest" pleadings. Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf do not describe and defend their proposals simply as morally righteous; they show how they would be economically beneficial.

But back to that free lunch. Few corporate leaders will embrace this approach, even if it does offer greater promise of "saving capitalism," albeit in a modified form, than their own strategies. The authors give particularly short shrift to the complex set of challenges that would be raised by capital flight and capital strikes. It is a reminder that something more than good ideas of Bowles, Gordon, Weisskopf and others will be needed. There will be no movement beyond the wasteland without a political movement powerful enough to carry us there. ■

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THE THIRTIES



Historical Pictures Service

The red and the black: the CP in Harlem

Communists in Harlem During the Depression

By Mark Naison
University of Illinois Press,
360 pp., \$19.95

By Maurice Isserman

When you add up all the historians, graduate students, Red diaper babies, ex-Communists-writing-memoirs and political-activists-seeking-models-to-emulate-or-avoid who have in the last decade been poring over microfilm reels of the *Daily Worker*, vintage 1929-56, the newspaper has probably regained as large a circulation as it enjoyed at the height of the Popular Front.

The first wave of histories chronicling the rise and fall of American Communism appeared in the '50s and proved, without great difficulty, that the editorial line of the *Daily Worker* varied according to the prevailing political winds from Moscow. The second wave of histories of the Communist Party (CP) began appearing in the early '70s, and as yet shows no signs of receding.

The second wave historians, with a few exceptions, have conceded the main point established by their predecessors, and then gone on to ask new questions. Given the serious constraints imposed upon the Communists by the Party's links to the USSR, how successful were they in functioning as American leftists? What can be learned from their political experiences in the unemployed movement, in the unions, in ethnic communities, in the deep South? How did they come

to understand their role, as they attempted to square Leninist certainties with American ambiguities? What allowed them to sustain their political commitment (as well as their political illusions) for so many years?

Mark Naison, a veteran of the New Left and now a historian at Fordham University, was one of the earliest and most prolific contributors to the second wave of CP histories. He has written an engrossing account of the Communist Party's attempt in the '30s to win black Harlemites to its banners. Earlier histories treat this episode as the story of a white organization ensnaring blacks in an alien creed. Naison focuses on the experience and outlook of black Communists, a small but influential corps of intellectuals and activists who viewed the Party as an instrument through which American blacks could achieve the long-deferred promise of full social and political equality.

In addition, he shows how white Communists were affected by their encounter with this black community. Discussing the role that white Communist teachers played in the Harlem public schools in popularizing the teaching of black history, Naison argues:

The work of these teachers, sustained over 20 years, suggests the degree to which the Party's position on the Negro question had transcended its origins as a Comintern imperative and had linked up with powerful cultural impulses in American society. [Communists came to believe that] cultural interchange be-

tween the races represented a defining feature of the American experience....

White Communists may have initially regarded blacks simply as useful allies in the struggle for a Soviet America, but over the decade of the '30s blacks helped to "Americanize" the Communists' vision of what the coming socialist society should look like.

Many of the events described in Naison's book—the Scottsboro campaign, the "Yokinen trial," the hunger marches, the organization of the National Negro Congress—will be familiar to those who have read earlier accounts of the CP's efforts to become "the Party of black and white." What Naison brings to the story is an unparalleled knowledge of the CP's day-to-day activities and of its personnel (he seems to know the name, political history and personal attributes of every organizer the Party sent out on the streets of Harlem), as well as a shrewd grasp of the internal dynamics of political movements. By the mid-'30s the CP had proven it could function as a catalyst for mass protest movements in Harlem, but the number of blacks willing to join the Party remained small.

While the CP's membership in black Harlem increased in the late '30s (peaking at about 1,000 members in 1938), it drew its primary strength from among middle-class and intellectual circles, never attracting the kind of mass working-class support that the nationalist Garveyite movement had enjoyed in the '20s.

Dance lessons.

The Communists made strenuous efforts to create a sense of community between blacks and whites within the Party. (Harlem CP organizers grew concerned at one point in the '30s when they noticed that while black men would ask white women to dance at Party-sponsored dances, white men rarely asked black women. They decided that the problem was that white male Communists tended to be inept dancers, and arranged dance lessons for them.) The Communist Party

In the '30s, blacks helped to "Americanize" the Communists' visions of what a socialist society should look like.

came closer than any other group on the left, before or since, in building a genuinely interracial movement, and it is sobering to read *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* (or Harold Cruse's more polemical *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*) and realize how many problems they still had to surmount. As in the civil rights movement's "beloved community" 30 years later, ingrained prejudices and innocent misunderstandings made racial harmony a difficult ideal to achieve.

Naison generally refrains from Monday-morning quarterbacking, but he does suggest that the CP might have developed deeper roots in Harlem if it had formed all-black branches. CP branches in predominantly Jewish or Finnish communities developed a rich internal movement culture, which tied members closely to the Party through good times and bad. But for all the attention the Party paid to black history, black cultural forms never had much influence on the Party's structure or flavor in Harlem.

Naison ends his account in 1941. Hopefully, he or someone else will carry the story through the war years when Ben Davis Jr., a black Communist leader in Harlem, succeeded Adam Clayton Power Jr., as the only black member of the New York City Council. (I am not persuaded, as Naison seems to be, that the CP's role in Harlem during WWII and its immediate aftermath was simply the "trailing penumbra" of its strength in the '30s.)

Communists in Harlem During the Depression was a long time coming, but it was worth the wait. It should serve as a model for future community-based studies of the history of American Communism.

■ Maurice Isserman teaches American history at Smith College and is the author of *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War*.

MUSIC

Festival shows folk diversity



Ann Marsden

By Jay Walljasper

For the uninitiated, a visit to the Winnipeg Folk Festival might seem like a dull time. Those not acquainted with folk music might expect a weekend on the prairie listening to the endless warblings of earnest young men and women in flannel shirts with acoustic guitars. "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Amazing Grace" followed by a newly composed ballad of bittersweet love and then, for a change of pace, "We Shall Overcome."

But folk music has changed a great deal since the hootenanny heyday of the '60s. A boggling cross-section of musical styles—drawn from black, ethnic and Third World sources as well as WASP traditions—are now lined up behind the folk banner. And there is no better way to discover the diversity and dynamism of this music than the Winnipeg festival—a four-day event in early July that this year drew more than 30,000 people to wooded parklands just north of the city.

During the daytime, 10 separate stages featured musical workshops on subjects as scattered as "The songs of Bertolt Brecht," "Songs with the morals of a jackrabbit," "E=MC²: Is there life after Ronald Reagan?," "Punk Folk" and "Basic Accordion." At night the main stage featured performances as diverse as the funk-powered electric blues of Chicago's Son Seals Band, the blustery bagpipes of Britain's Blowzabella, the haunting pipe and drum melodies of Bolivia's Grupo Aymara as well as Steve Goodman's witty topical tunes and Leo Kottke's unique guitar compositions.

The list of performers at Winnipeg is so broad that one soon wonders what is the line separating folk from other styles of music? Before answering that question Mitch Podolak, founder and artistic director of the festival, quotes two definitions of folk music: Pete Seeger's ("A song passed down from one generation to another without being written down") and blues singer Big Bill Broonzy's ("All songs are folk songs. I never heard a horse sing.")

Podolak stakes out a middle course between those extremes, saying folk music is "music that is not written specifically for the marketplace." His definition offers enough leeway so that he can book Tony Bird (a white African protest songwriter who performs with a rock band) and Finjan (a Winnipeg klezmer band that plays old wedding tunes and vaudeville numbers out of the Eastern Europe Jewish tradition) alongside bluegrass bands and New Foundland fiddlers. The only thing in common between these musical styles is that they are all a means of expression not likely to be found on the radio dial or in most record shops.

The great accomplishment of the Winnipeg festival is that it pulls in a demographically diverse crowd and quickly dissolves their natural skepticism about unfamiliar styles of music. For instance, Queen Ida—a black, middle-aged, female, French-speaking Cajun accordion player—was greeted with the kind of thundering enthusiasm usually enjoyed only by heavy metal rock bands. Similarly, Grupo Aymara won the hearts and ears of thousands of people, many of whom probably had never before given any thought to the South American highlands and the Indians who live there.

Subtly yet very persuasively, the festival asserts that all societies have a cultural contribution to offer the world—not just sophisticated, college-trained urban dwellers from industrialized nations.

The festival also provides a forum for views on issues ranging from the controversial Garri-

son water diversion project in nearby North Dakota to Chilean exiles' indictment of the Pinochet regime. Ever since the popular front strategy of the Communists in the '30s, folk music has been associated with the left, although as Podolak can prove by singing a few old tunes, it is not free of racism, sexism and militarism.

Gary Cristall—coordinator of the Vancouver Folk Festival, one of Winnipeg's chief rivals for the status of North America's premier folk music event—points out that a lot of music is labeled "folk" simply because it is political—and therefore deemed unfit for the pop music marketplace. He and Podolak, both of whom were red diaper babies, agree that one purpose of their festivals is to promote both music and political ideas that are not often heard in the mass media.

Public funding.

Winnipeg is the older of the two festivals; it celebrated its 10th anniversary this year with a special

Thursday night all-Canadian concert and a coast-to-coast radio broadcast of the Sunday night show by the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC).

Podolak was a CBC journalist and organizer for a Trotskyist political party when he hit on the idea of a folk festival. Winnipeg was then planning a year of special events to commemorate its centennial, so Podolak proposed the festival and the city underwrote much of the cost.

Today the city still provides some funds for the event along with the province of Manitoba and other government sources, but 80 percent of the festival's budget comes through ticket sales and independent fundraising. Podolak points out that this situation is far different from most music festivals in the U.S., which often become corporate-public-image projects—the Kool cigarette jazz festivals, for instance, or Schlitz Beer's sponsorship of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage festival.



Ann Marsden

DISCUSSIONS

Heaven 17: Heaven 17 (Arista)
Heaven 17: The Luxury Gap (Arista)

Like it or not, synthesizers are here to stay. *Variety* reported in a recent page one story, "Electronics will increasingly dominate the music scene." But that does not necessarily mean that we are in for a whole generation of dispassionate, cynical, computer-synchronized sounds such as those programmed by the first generation of rock'n'rollers to toy with the new musical technology. Black funk musicians seem to have had an easier time finding the soul in these new machines and it has already rubbed off on many of the young white musicians who are more likely to be heard on the radio.

Case in point is Heaven 17, a versatile British band that has erected a rich, hard-edged sound upon a foundation of synthesizers—at times they sound reminiscent of Memphis soul, reggae, cartoon soundtracks and a symphony warming up. This musical meandering is matched by an unrom-

antic yet compassionate view of today's troubles.

Heaven 17 doesn't shy away from out-and-out political manifestos such as "(We Don't Need This) Fascist Groove Thang" (the best leftist anthem in years; sort of a high-tech "Solidarity Forever") from their eponymous first U.S. album or "Let's All Build a Bomb" (witty and catchy but not all you'd hope it would be) from *The Luxury Gap*. But they also take a hard look at the way things are in songs dealing with more conventional pop music subjects such as romance, youthful ambitions and nightlife diversions. "Geisha Boys and Temple Girls" contrasts the golden Adonises and Venuses who frolic on the screen in everyone's hometown with the tough day-to-day details of holding together a relationship when money is tight and partners go to work on different time schedules.

The album *Heaven 17* features more synthesizer and is generally more vigorous in its music and message. *The Lux-*

ury Gap employs a sizzling old R&B sound, along with a lyrical ambiguity that sometimes manages sophisticated commentary but that occasionally trails off into vagueness. —J.W.

Meg Christian and Cris Williamson:
At Carnegie Hall
(Second Wave/Olivia)

Nearly 6,000 women in bowties and black jackets converged on Carnegie Hall last November to celebrate a decade of achievement against the odds. Olivia Records' 10th anniversary concert was a one-time event—uncontainable in energy and wildly infused with the spirit of a woman-identified vision. It is this spirit that has made Olivia the single most successful "women's music" label with 17 releases and sales of nearly a million LPs—all produced outside the sanction of the mainstream music industry and sold through an international grassroots network of distributors and promoters.

The live recording of the Car-

negie Hall celebration is even better than the concert. Veteran producers Betty Rowland and Tret Fure managed to capture the nuance and lyric on tape that the audience strained to hear that night from balcony seats where the music echoed in muddy and diffuse waves.

Christian's solo set is stunning new material, especially "The Ones Who Aren't Here," a song sent to her by a man in Vermont. Williamson's set suffers from a sameness of chord progressions and rhythms, but the back-up vocalists and musicians lend a polished fullness to the arrangements that mitigates the musical redundancy.

Christian and Williamson team up for the most harmonically sensual version of Margie Adams' "Beautiful Soul" available on record, and the delicate medley of favorites from the early Olivia albums are the biggest crowd-pleasers.

This album captures the essence of the Olivia project—what is unique about the music and the movement. What each woman brought to the concert that night is delivered back to us in vinyl. It is Olivia's finest and most moving LP to date.

—G.E.

Contributors: Georgann Eubanks, Jay Walljasper.

Review

Continued from page 12

ple captured the prevailing mood at *Partisan Review*.

Beyond writers' politics.

As Trotsky pointed out, the proletarian art that allegedly benefited a class in fact served only a party. Even after the Popular Front, literary Communists continued to trade in the Marxist practice of looking behind the superstructure of bourgeois art for the capitalist economic base. According to the formula, art created under corrupt economic and social conditions merely reproduced those conditions. Although the Popular Front steered intellectuals away from proletarianism, it substituted in its place a mythical American progressive past. In either case, as Trotsky affirmed, "art can become a strong ally of revolution only in so far as it remains faithful to itself."

The *Partisan Review* critics venerated the difficult modernist writers: Joyce, Eliot, Dostoevsky, Yeats and Proust, whose practical politics were anything but radical. Indeed, this is *Partisan Review*'s greatest legacy to critical thought. Its critics perceived that in the complex relation of literature to politics, a writer's explicit politics (Eliot's traditionalism, for example) may in fact mask genuinely subversive ideas that are embodied in radically new forms.

bodied in radically new forms.

Many of the articles collected here not only enact this aesthetic principle but also address *Partisan Review*'s other major concern: the role of the adversarial intellectual in the modern world. Articles such as Phillips' "The Intellectuals' Tradition" and Arthur Koestler's "The Intelligentsia" argue for a politically aware yet detached "occupational grouping" capable of maintaining a broad view of cultural history. But as *Partisan Review*'s later history attests, the fragile consensus of the early '40s (when Phillips' and Koestler's articles were published) gave way to disillusionment and dissent. (Macdonald, for example, left to begin his own magazine *Politics* because, unlike the other editors, he did not support American entry into World War II.)

Many anti-Stalinist radicals retreated into various forms of political despair or reaction. Still others developed non-Marxist radical positions: formidable essays in *Writers and Politics* by Albert Camus, Hannah Arendt and Czeslaw Milosz all assume a double-vision of ideological skepticism and political hope. Yet others, especially those who participated in the 1952 *Partisan Review* symposium, "Our Country and Our Culture" (not in this volume), decided to side uncritically with the admittedly flawed West in the face of a seemingly intransigent East.

More upheavals.

The political and cultural upheavals of the '60s and '70s found *Partisan Review*

once again uncertain of its editorial stance, though secure financially as a result of support from the American Congress for Cultural Freedom (1958-63), Rutgers University (1963-78) and Boston University (1978-present). Open to the post-modern aesthetics of Susan Sontag and, belatedly, to the New Left politics of Morris Dickstein (both included here), the editors also remained sympathetic to the anti-modernist Daniel Bell and the cultural traditionalist Irving Howe (also represented here). The closing contribution to the anthology—a symposium on neo-conservatism—points to *Partisan Review*'s present political impasse. When it isn't recreating its past (as Paul Berman recently pointed out in the *Village Voice*), *Partisan Review*'s current politics waver between democratic socialism and the neo-conservative foreign policies of *The New Republic*.

Yet no conventional political labels can do justice to the depth and diversity of *Partisan Review*'s venerable past—Rahv's hasty departure from the magazine in 1963 is a story in itself and may account for the astonishing fact that he is unrepresented in this anthology. Historian James Gilbert has given us an accurate though partial history, *Writers and Partisans* (1968). But these seldom reprinted selections will also provide a healthy antidote to the current critical and aesthetic malaise in which politics seem, once again, hopelessly sectarian—or worse, altogether absent. ■

Thomas De Pietro teaches English at the University of Virginia.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement and should be sent to the attention of **Beth Maschnot**.

CHICAGO, IL

July 31

Fireworks of blues and folk music will be the main attraction of a benefit for the Chicago Peace Council. Appearing: Erwin Helfer, Angela Brown, Jim Brewer and Albert Holland. Also the Chicano folk singer "Chuy" Negrete and Rebecca Shepherd from the Old Town School of Folk Music, and Andrew Leslie, storyteller. Crosscurrent, 3206 N. Wilton. 4:30 p.m. \$10 tickets (includes a light supper) available at The Chicago Peace Council, 53 W. Jackson, #631, Chicago, 60604. (312) 922-6578.

September 30-October 2

First Annual Midwest Blue Collar Tradeswomen's Conference. Midland Hotel, 172 W. Adams. Theme: "Women Forging New Frontiers." Designed for women in skilled crafts/blue collar occupations, including construction, mining, manufacturing, mechanical/protective services. Registration: \$25; advanced registration required. For brochures, contact Audrey Denecke, Conference Coordinator, Midwest Women's Center, 53 W. Jackson, #1015, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 922-8530.

PORTLAND, OR

August 21

The theme for Portland's skid road community's 3rd Annual Hobo Parade is the "Parade for the Homeless and Unemployed." The neighborhood festive event will focus attention on the growing plight of the homeless and unemployed in the Pacific Northwest. Assembly for the parade begins at 11:00 a.m. in the North Park blocks (8th & Everett, N.W.). Parade begins at noon and winds up in Waterfront Park for an afternoon rally complete with food, music and political speeches. Sponsored by the Burnside Community Council. For info: (503) 231-7158.

CHEVY CHASE, MD

August 24-28

Union for Radical Political Economics 1983 Summer Conference: "Restructuring Capitalism in the 1980s." Panels, workshops and papers on: the role of the State, the nature and scope of the current crisis, corporate strategies, trade union responses, the political economy of race relations, women, children and families in the 80's, the international division of labor, initiatives from the U.S. left. URPE business meetings, caucus meetings, sports, films, childcare. Pre-registration required, for details write: URPE, 41 Union Square West #901, New York 10003.

INDIANA, PA

October 26-28

Conference, "Technology and Society: Human Values and Policy Making," Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Exploration of economic, political, social and cultural facets. Participants include William Winpisinger, Harley Shaiken, Stanley Aronowitz, Marion Anderson, Arthur Waskow, Judy Gregory. Contact Irwin Marcus, History Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705, (412) 357-2237.

WASHINGTON, DC

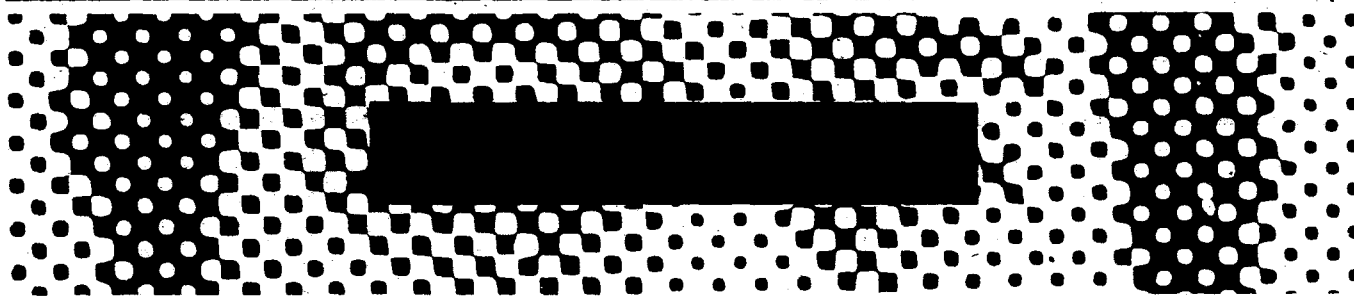
August 5-9

Five days of activities to commemorate Hiroshima/Nagasaki, including: Vigil to commemorate the bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the White House (Pa. Ave. sidewalk) Aug. 5 at 7:00 p.m. (Hiroshima) and Aug. 8 at 9:45 (Nagasaki) Workshops: biological effects of the arms race, arms race and the Third World, and children's workshop on the arms race, noon-5:00, Aug. 6. Martin Luther King Jr. Information Fair for Human Rights and Human Needs, Lincoln Memorial, 5:00 p.m.-dark, Aug. 7. 8:15 Ecumenical service, Lincoln Memorial, Aug. 7. Evaluation gathering at Gray Panther Office, 711 8th St. NW, 10:00 a.m., Aug. 9. Sponsored by the Hiroshima/Nagasaki Committee.

August 28

Solomon Amendments deprive draft non-registrants of federal education and job-training aid. Committee Against Registration & Draft (CARD) sponsoring information and strategy meeting: "Defeating the Solomon Amendments." Washington, DC August 28, 10-4 p.m., Methodist Building (110 Maryland Ave.). Contact CARD, 201 Mass. Ave. NE #111, (202) 547-4340 or local CARD affiliate.

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HSS3

Jail

Continued from page 18

compromises before differences hardened. Decision making by consensus is slow and cumbersome, but in jail there was lots of time for meetings. But even in Santa Rita there would have been problems if consensus had been rigidly adhered to. Some leadership was needed to create cohes-

ion and guide shifts in strategy. In fact, an informal leadership coalesced to lead meetings and formulate policy. There appeared to be nothing but appreciation for work done by this group.

The non-violent philosophy and viewpoints that came together among the women at Santa Rita was different from any I had ever participated in. But I could see potential dangers. The logic of these moral visions can run counter to the logic of political strategy. An anti-intellectual and anti-scientific bent could lead

this movement to a cultural sectarianism. In a movement that discourages formal leadership, an informal leadership is sure to emerge, not in any way accountable to its constituency. The process of consensus could drive busy people out. It would be easy for those who participate in civil disobedience to see other forms of peace activity as less worthy, and thus neglect other, equally important, wings of the peace movement.

After holding out for 11 days, we reached a settlement with

Judge Lewis: he announced that there would be no probation and that we could each decide whether to stay in jail for six more days or pay a \$240 fine. He would negotiate no further, he said. Though the sentence was harsh, we won a real victory on the central issue of probation by making it clear that two years' probation amounted to prior restraint—the squelching of future civil disobedience and dissent. Our claim of Lewis' bias against the peace movement had been vindicated by an action of the State

Supreme Court directing Lewis to give us access to normal bail and OR procedures, and one by the State Superior Court granting our request for a hearing on Lewis' fitness to judge our cases.

Most important, we gained widespread attention to the cause that we represented. By staying in jail, we brought the issue of the Livermore labs, and of the arms race generally, before the public.

Barbara Epstein teaches history at the University of California-Santa Cruz.

CLASSIFIED

PUBLICATIONS

JULY-AUGUST, JEWISH CURRENTS, Meir Pa'il, "Israeli Arms Sales to Central America," Editorial, "Withdrawal from Lebanon?," Mitchell Abidor, "Franz Kafka's Jewish Question," Editorial, "Reagan vs. Civil Rights." Single copy postpaid \$1.50. Subscription \$10 USA. Jewish Currents, Dept. T, 22 E. 17 St., NYC 10003.

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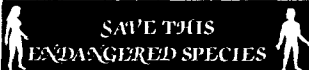
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I INTERVIEWED 29-YEAR-OLD FILMMAKER Susan Seidelman to see if she has developed an analysis of "new wave" culture that her independent feature *SMITHEREENS* does not. Although the film doesn't explain the apathy and cynicism of the '80s, it does capture the changes our value system has gone through in recent years. Seidelman uses two characters to represent the contrast between the old and new. Paul, a hippie who comes to New York City from Oklahoma, represents the more traditional value system, characterized by a down-to-earth sensitivity complete with blue jeans and t-shirts. He's attracted to Wren, a spunky, sardonic, selfish (but modern) young woman who only wants to be a punk rock star (so she can "eat tacos and drink martinis by a pool somewhere in California"). But Wren only uses Paul, as she is in turn used by Eric, a punk rocker (played by punk rock legend Richard Hell). So Paul finally gives up and leaves for New Hampshire. This is just before Wren—in emotional and financial desperation—realizes that he is the only person that cares for her, thus forcing a re-examination of her values and lifestyle.

The film ends where it should have begun, leaving a number of important questions about new wave culture unanswered: is it that today's kids are pushing and being pushed to extremes by a commodity culture—purchasing funky clothes, haircuts, records and imported beers in order to become stars? Are they rebels, revolutionaries or just anarchists waiting for the system to break down?

SMITHEREENS seems to be a pessimistic view of society—it seems that everyone is out for themselves.

Maybe it is a little pessimistic, but, hopefully times will change. What I think is important is that if you confront the fact that that's the way things are, maybe that's how change comes about. Not to ignore, but to deal with the fact that times are hard. As a result of times being hard, everyone is scrounging around trying to survive. Not that that's good, but once you are aware of that, maybe then we can all say, "Whooh, this isn't working out."

Do you think that new wave culture has a political quality to it? Do you think it is a positive or negative development?

I'm not a sociologist or whoever defines those kinds of things. I can only say that there are good things and bad things about it. What I'm interested in is the fact that it exists and maybe it is a stage that you have to go through in order to get something better. The only thing I feel strongly is that life is a lot harder now than it was 15 years ago, on every socio-economic level. It manifests itself in different ways, but everyone feels it.

Susan Seidelman—director of the punk film *Smithereens*—talks about New Wave culture.

Other than cynicism, what other qualities or characteristics of the new group do you see?

Well, for lack of better phrases, there's a "go-for-it" attitude. If the '60s were concerned with social consciousness, thinking about the group, and if the '70s were knowing, the jogging, est, self-improvement decade—the '80s is certainly "times are rough, I'm going to grab hold of something and go for it" mentality. I think, for example, in the case of Wren and Eric, they don't stop to think about if they are hurting someone else. They are just grabbing something. It's like grabbing hold of a raft that's floating in the ocean just so that you don't go under.

BY DANNY POPKIN

Is the film autobiographical at all?

No and yes. I am about 10 years older than the main character is supposed to be, but I remember when I was younger, and certainly right now, when there is something I want to do, I go after it. Being a woman and whatever the other qualifiers are, doesn't seem to stop me. Also, like the main character, I'm a victim of the '60s and '70s pop culture.

Throughout the film you had certain scenes with sort of cliché TV programming in them.

It also was sort of political. One of the TV clips was Reagan in *Bedtime for Bonzo*. The other one was religious—it was a religious TV show. For me, what it was, in some ways is the reality that TV is projecting—which I find rather absurd, and it's like people look at these characters and think, "Oh god, these people are really crazy." But then, look at the stuff that is being put out over the airwaves that we are being brought up on—and to me that is even more absurd than the way the characters live.

I see the Wren and Eric characters in some ways as the younger sisters and brothers of the hippie generation in the sense that I think a lot of the '80s subculture, late '70s culture, is a reaction against the idealism of the '60s.

In the '60s everyone felt that the world would change and that 10 years later it

would be such a wonderful place. And here it is 10 or 15 years later and, if anything, life has gotten harder. So I think that there is a kind of cynicism that evolved just as a result of lost or unfulfilled expectations.

In the film it struck me that the actress playing Wren, Susan Berman, had a particular way of walking, that she was very spunky. I thought of her as a cocky clown in a circus. Did you specifically direct her to walk that way?

Originally I had this vision: I wanted to have a pop culture style—since it is about pop culture, to some extent, and I wanted it to be influenced by cartoons, comic books or something like that. So when I thought of the character of Wren—what I thought about was Olive Oyl. One of the reasons I wanted to have the cartoony edge to it was because I knew that the world I was portraying was in some ways a little depressing, and I thought just to deal with it in a very gritty, sleazy way would turn off a lot of people.

Were you originally intending to make a film of it, or was it just a story intended to be a novel?

It was originally intended as a film. Basically, I used to live in the East Village and I went to New York University Film School—it's on East 7th Street right underneath the old Filmore East. This was in the mid-'70s and I noticed the neighborhood was sort of changing from when I first got there. I guess it was in 1974. Nothing was happening: the counterculture from the '60s was moving out and nothing was taking its place, and by the time I left NYU—in 1976 or 1977—a new group of people started moving in. So I was really aware that culturally something was changing and I also started seeing characters that intrigued me, one of them being a Wren type. I decided that somehow they represented something about modern life that I hadn't seen in films before, and so I started kind of taking notes on my own—just ideas for scenes and stuff, but I really didn't know what I wanted to do with it.

Do you think film is the most powerful art form available to an artist?

No, I don't. But I think it's the most accessible for a mass audience. If you want to communicate to a large group of people, especially in the last half of the 20th century, film has a power that no other mediums have. Although, I think in terms of influence, there are certainly books, plays and paintings and stuff that probably have greater potential influence than films.

Do you find that you have to compromise to a certain extent in that people in this country are used to certain film style?

It's interesting, because growing up as a product of my pop culture, I think I'm in tune with that. I don't think I would try to be commercial. I think I have commercial instincts because I grew up on Hollywood movies; but I am also aware that I have a little twist in there—so it is like taking commercial forms and twisting them a little bit to make a personal statement, but still within the context of the popular form.

Danny Popkin is a 23-year-old filmmaker and writer who is studying political economy at the New School in New York City.